

Advice Corner

A parents guide to "Early Maths"

For those of us who hated maths at school, it may come as a surprise to learn that humans are naturally mathematical. Babies can detect differences in quantities when shown images on a screen. So with this in mind, how can we help them to start to enjoy maths based activities?

Toddlers also learn about maths from food - count spoonfuls as they are put on a plate or bowl and talk about a 'little' or 'more' when serving food. Then using water play is great fun for toddlers filling up and emptying cups and beakers.

With Babies

You are probably doing maths with them without realising it! Building up a tower of blocks or stacking beakers and letting them go helps babies to learn that things change shape.

It also helps them to notice size and perspective. If you roll a ball your baby is learning about speed and distance. Being rocked and hearing rhymes will also help your baby learn about patterns. You may notice that your baby reacts if you suddenly stop singing or rocking.

Also babies learn about things being finished or empty when we say 'all gone' to them. Again this is all mathematical learning and if you combine some classic toys in their play they will learn and retain the knowledge more easily.

Maths with Toddlers

Toddlers love to be busy. Just being on a ride-on toy is helping your child learn about space, speed and dimensions. Can I fit through that gap? Not usually on the first time but repeated play makes toddlers able to judge widths of doorways or between items of furniture.

Remember to use 'posting' activities as toddlers love to drop things - count as you put objects into a cardboard tube and count them out again - the more time a child hears the counting, the better they will make connections with the numbers and the words.

Children from Age 3

At this age you may hear child start to count aloud. It's a bit hit and miss at first but over time children learn the words and start to put them in the right order. Help them to count different objects by touching them at the same time - e.g. buttons on a coat or the pieces in a puzzle. Be patient with your child's progress because everyone proceeds at a different pace.

For older children, using dice games or helping with cooking ingredients - measuring and counting out quantities - are great learning experiences as well as being inexpensive fun. At this age children become used to seeing numerals so point them out when you see them - on your front door or on the telephone for instance.

Our top tips:

- Using jigsaw puzzles and blocks are good for problem solving and spatial awareness.
- Don't worry if your child makes mistakes with their counting - it is part of their development
- Point out numbers in day - to day life around your home and out and about with your child.
- Encourage your child to join in as you count.
- Keep activities simple and practical so your child develops strong concepts with numbers.

AND FINALLY OUR PICTURE FILE



HAPPY NEW YEAR - Chinese style



Snakes alive at Boroughbridge!



Chris earns his five stars at Scarborough



Holiday club at the media museum



Sand-play is a Batley favourite



Newsletter 35

Spring 2011

First, let's start with a serious question for this year - do you see the green shoots of recovery yet or just the dead wood of recession? Well, let's be optimistic as the days become longer and Spring - the season of new life and creativity - is at last with us again. We've just celebrated Chinese New Year - the Year of the Rabbit - at all our nurseries with lanterns, bunnies and delicious oriental goodies being the order of the day. The Rabbit is a sign of good fortune through graciousness, good manners and kindness - and we could all do with more of that this year! So, let's look for the green and enjoy the delights that Spring brings - after all things can only get better, so the song goes...

Reading your way to success

Children who have been in pre-school education are likely to be much better readers when they are aged 15 reveals a study of international test results. The OECD has published an analysis of tests taken by pupils in developed countries looking at the long-term impact of pre-school education. This showed that 15-year-olds who had attended a pre-school were on average a year ahead of those who had not. This advantage was particularly strong for pupils in the UK and looked at the links between achievement in these tests and pupils' first experiences of education.



In the swim

Children who regularly go swimming have a decreased risk of asthma, according to European researchers who analysed data from nearly 6,000 children in the UK. They found that those who had bouts of wheezing before age three were less likely to develop asthma by age seven if they swam. The study found an association between regular swimming, improved lung function and a decreased risk of asthma symptoms.



"I Wanna Work with Children and Animals"

Apparently hotel heiress and general layabout Paris Hilton has declared that she would love to be a nursery teacher as she 'loves kids.' The lucky children in her care could make extensive use of her wardrobe for role play sessions and have great fun putting in hair extensions and making perfumes! Plus they would learn lots about the natural world from her extensive collections of dogs, frogs, rabbits, parrots, monkeys and a micro-pig (with or without matching handbag). Alas, her record of personal, social and emotional development may just get in her way, so best stay doing what you are currently doing eh Paris...er, which is what exactly?



Richer but Poorer...

Despite the technological advances and the abundance of wealth that is 21st Century living, a fifth of 7 year olds in the UK live in severe poverty with both parents earning less than half the national average, according to new research. This is confirmed in the latest report from the Millennium Cohort Study, which tracks the long term health, education and welfare of almost 14,000 children born between 2000 and 2002. No prizes for guessing that the number in poverty will rise due to the impact of the current cuts programme and reduction in public sector employment numbers.

In the news recently...

Father and first time author Scott McIntyre has made every little boy's dream come true by turning his son into a superhero, reported the Daily Mail. Disappointed by the children's books available, he wrote one starring his son as Super Magic Lightning Boy and his sidekick cat Dixiel!

One in four children thinks foxes live in trees, according to a survey by organic milk supplier Co-operative, which is sponsoring a global conservation Cub Scout badge.



A 7 year old girl ran up a £250 bill in under an hour after playing a game on Facebook, reported the Daily Mail. Megan Fox from Birmingham spent the money while playing 'Petville' which allows users to buy virtual clothes and furniture for their pets. Her father, who had allowed Megan to log onto his account, did not realise she was spending real money - his!

A 3 year old boy using a metal detector for the first time unearthed a gold pendant said to be work over £2.5m reported Sky News. James Hyatt, from Essex, made the discovery whilst out with his father. Experts believe the rare locket dates back to the 16th Century and was used to hold religious relics.



Stuck for this year's Christmas presents (for Dad?)... well, the ultimate boys toy - a 145ft long Scalextric track has been created by an American model car fanatic, reports the Sun. The miniature Formula One track features 19 twists and turns, pit lanes and a helipad - will fit most domestic lounges (once you've removed unnecessary items like sofas, chairs and coffee tables...)

A children's clothing store in London was asked to stop selling a babygro outfit that featured an image similar to the famous winged skulls of the Hell's Angels, reported the Metro newspaper. 'Nippaz with Attitude' says it created the best selling babygro to pay homage to the iconic bikers. The garment has now been taken off their website.



Wakey, wakey, sleepy Scarborough shepherds



York pre-schoolers get the pumpkin spirit!

Make it easier with a DD

Cut down on your bank charges by paying your fees with a direct debit - ask us for a form and we will do the rest - its as easy as that! Plus we can now take credit card payments if you prefer - just ask us for details.

~ News from our Nurseries ~

Just a note to say thank you to all parents who attended our Christmas plays and to everyone involved in presenting them. They were simply star performances all round!

Boroughbridge

Our babies had fairytale fun making and decorating a magical castle and wearing our fancy princess hats to our tea party!

Our colour theme is a big hit in Tweenies where we have built huge green megablock towers, got covered in different coloured paints (with some even getting onto paper!) and made red glittery pasta!

Meanwhile our pre-schoolers have been learning to keep quiet (yes, really) when they have been doing their weekly visits to the local library to chose some reading books as well as find out about the job of a librarian.

York

Our children in need day was great fun in our spotty outfits and especially when Rob in pre-school volunteered to have his legs waxed - ouch!

No rest for our babies who have been busy with space day, making meteor showers (see our recipe) and singing three little men in a flying saucer and then its gym day when we all wore our sporty clothes and got medals for our athletic games!

We learnt all about Burns night and even had a taste of haggis - yuck!

Batley

It was happy 5th birthday for us at Batley on 29th January and Mandy made a big birthday cake for us - we even had our picture in the local paper!

Dare we mention all the snow? Well, we had great fun in it and built loads of snowmen in our gardens!

Our Holiday Club really enjoyed their trip to the Bradford media museum where we had a go at reading the news and recording it on TV!

There were funny sights recently when all of us came dressed up as our favourite book character when we celebrated national storytelling week!

Scarborough

Following a recent Environmental Health Inspection, our chef Chris has gained a 5-Star rating for our Scarborough nursery kitchen. The Inspector found 'high compliance with law and good practice' and observed 'very good standards and practices.' Inspections are unannounced and scrutinise the food preparation premises and practices based on criteria set at European Union level. Under the 'Scores on the Doors' scheme, each kitchen is given a hygiene rating or score that reflects the inspection findings. A five star rating is the highest recognition. Well done Chris - the children made special stars for him (see our picture).

We all had a great time when the Fun Bus came to visit nursery - and we especially enjoyed our Christmas party when we all got dressed up in our posh togs and Santa came to give us all presents.

Our pre-schoolers have especially creative by making our calendars for home - and getting full of glitter and glue in the process!

Parents Evenings: Advance reminder for your diaries that our Spring parents evenings will be on the following dates: York on 12th May, Batley on 19th May, Scarborough on 26th May and Boroughbridge on 2nd June. As usual supper and drinks will be provided and we hope you will join us.

SPRING RECIPES

METEOR SHOWERS

We love Meteor Showers at York for which you will need

- 250g self raising flour
- 90g soft brown sugar
- 90g butter
- 125g sprinkles
- 1 egg

Put the flour and butter in a mixing bowl and mix together. Add the sugar and sprinkles and mix well using your hands.

Beat the egg and add to the mixture and mix well with a fork. Squeeze small amounts into the size of golf balls. Place on a greased tray and bake for 20 minutes at 200 degrees or gas mark 6. Cool and serve whilst singing 3 little men in a flying saucer!



CHOCOLATE CRINKLE COOKIES

And for dessert how about chocolate crinkle cookies...

To make 24 cookies:

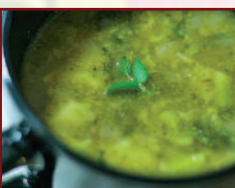
- 60g icing sugar
- 230g plain flour
- 40g unsweetened cocoa powder
- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- 4 oz butter at room temperature
- 250g sugar
- 2 large eggs
- ½ teaspoon vanilla essence



Put the icing sugar in one bowl and set aside. In another bowl mix the flour, cocoa, baking powder with a wooden spoon. Then in another large bowl beat the sugar and eggs with an electric whisk for about 3 minutes until creamy. Add 1 egg and beat on medium speed until blended then add the other egg and vanilla and beat until blended. Turn off the mixer and add the flour and mix on low speed until blended. Scoop the dough into small balls and roll in icing sugar and place on a greased baking tray. Bake for 12 minutes at 180 degrees until cracked and puffed. Cool and serve with tea!

JUNGLE SOUP

Meanwhile we just love our Jungle Soup at Scarborough - you will need...



- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 2 onions chopped
- 1 garlic clove chopped
- 500g potatoes peeled and chopped
- 1 kg broccoli roughly chopped
- 1 litre milk
- 1 litre chicken or veg stock
- Dash of lemon juice

Heat oil in a large saucepan and add onions and garlic and fry until softened. Add the potatoes and broccoli and stir for around 5 minutes. Add the stock and milk and cook gently until all the vegetables are tender. Remove from the heat and blend adding the lemon juice to taste. Serve with fresh crusty bread!

~~~~ Spring Songs to sing ~~~~

(To the tune of 'London Bridge'...)

Leaves are growing on the trees, on the trees, on the trees; Leaves are growing on the trees, it is springtime. Then... All the grass is turning green.; See the birdies build their nest; Watch the flowers start to grow;

And not forgetting that we all do recycling now...

(To the tune of 'Working on the Railroad'...)

We've been working on recycling all the trash we can, We've been working on recycling, it's a very simple plan; Separate your glass and paper, Separate your plastic and your tin, Take the trash that you've recycled to your recycling bin!

What our children say...

Feeling particularly festive, Jack invited his pre-school friends over to have 'a lovely glass of mulled wine darling!' with him as he played in the home corner!

Pre-schoolers were doing leaf rubbings and Caitlin said, 'the leaves are falling off the trees because it's nearly Santa time!'

Tweenies were learning to put their toys into baskets and Taylor said to her tweeny friends, 'now put your toy in your basket so it doesn't get wrecked!'

Emily said to staff member Claire, 'My daddy drinks mucky beer, but I don't because girls don't like it.' Claire replied, 'well sometimes I drink it,' to which Emily responded, 'you're disgusting then, yuck!'

Louis was pretending to drive and Janice asked him where he was going. 'Just popping out for some wine,' he replied!

When practising for the Christmas play, Emma advised that 'we need to save a big place for Janice because she has a big bum!' (sorry Janice!)

Ella looked puzzled one morning and so asked Helen, 'am I right handed or wrong handed?'

Holly looked out of the window when it was raining heavily and asked, 'Is the sky broken? Is that why it is raining so much?'

Ross asked whose scissors were left on the side and Louise said to him that they were Emma's. So Ross asked, 'and why is she not scissoring anymore?'

Sianna asked the pre-schoolers if they had enjoyed their weekend. Jay replied, 'weekends are boring as there's no nursery at weekends!'

Holly said to Dad on the way out of nursery, 'What are we having for tea?' to which Dad replied, 'I don't know, mummy's cooking,' to which Holly responded, 'so are we going for a Chinese?'

Nadine was talking to her Mum about where different foods came from and she told her that milk came from cows. Mum then asked her where bacon came from and Nadine said somewhat exasperated, 'Oh Mummy, the cooker!'



Letters from our Parents...

To Gemma and staff, A mere Thank You is simply not enough! When I first considered nurseries I rang a few to make viewing appointments, but with Happy Jays I decided to call in 'on spec' as you were only round the corner from Daddy's place of work. If I'd been told to make an appointment I may have been suspicious, however, I was warmly greeted and shown around and that's exactly what I wanted - to get a real feel for the place I was intending to hand over my precious bundle for almost 10 hours a day! PERFECT! That was the only way to describe you to my Mum. When we refer to nursery now, it's always 'nurturey' as that's what you do -you nurture! Your caring ethos delivers a home from home loving environment coupled with the excellent educational standards you have achieved and I felt that I was leaving her in the care of her family. Faradei has adored her time with you and is now described by her teachers as a creative little genius. Her number skills and reading are both advanced and the credit for this must go to your staff as hand-on-heart there's precious little time at home once the troops are all fed, watered and sorted! We cannot express our thanks enough to you all for your first class care - keep up the good work, we will miss you all. With much love, The Parkers.

Dear Holly, Laura, Katie and all at Happy Jays, Thank you so much for all the time, care and attention you have given to David. We felt very privileged having him in your care. We can see how much he enjoys it and how he has grown and developed from a 4 month old baby into the 18 month toddler he is today. He has benefited so much from Happy Jays and we know he will miss all three of you and the team at nursery. Best of luck to you all and if you are ever in New Zealand do stop by and see us. Love & best wishes, Chris & Pamela.

To Everyone at Happy Jays, Thank you so much for your helpfulness and support. Evelyn has really loved coming to nursery and gets very excited when we drive into the car-park. She as really thrived in your loving and fun atmosphere and will miss all her little friends. We're all very sad to be moving and have cherished memories of you all. Lots of love, Ed, Charlotte & Evelyn.

Dear Andrea and Faye & all the girls at Happy Jays, Words cannot thank you enough for all the care you have given Olivia over the past few years. She has loved Happy Jays - she has grown in confidence, she is polite and she is a very happy girl. Her speech has come on in leaps and bounds for which we thank you. I feel really sad she's going to school and a huge, huge thank you again for taking great care of our children. Love from Jane, Mark, Alexander & Olivia.

Dear Andrea, We would like to thank you and all the staff at Happy Jays for the care, kindness and nurturing you have provided for Ali. He has thrived so much during his time with you and has enjoyed his nursery days. We know he will enjoy school because you have given him such strong foundations in his development - he is a confident and outgoing little boy with a busy, enquiring mind and you have played an important part in bring out his unique personality. Thank you so much, Gillian and Keith.

To Gemma & the staff at Happy Jays York, Today is Jazlyn's last day with you before starting school. We just wanted to say a big thank you for looking after her so well since she was a baby. We have been delighted with Happy Jays and you have often exceeded our expectations with the service you have given us. We have never ceased to be amazed at the things you do with the children. We remember Jazlyn having strawberry mouse bath play when she was a baby - something we dared not do at home! More recently, she has taken part in the last 2 Christmas plays which she has enjoyed immensely. We had absolutely no hesitations in booking a place for Zeyna as soon as we knew Helen was pregnant. We would like to say a particular thank you to the staff who have been Jazlyn's key-workers over the years - Emma, Kerina and Becky. Thank you also to Helen in the kitchen as Jazlyn has eaten a wide variety of freshly cooked foods at nursery. Her social and academic skills she has learnt will give her a great platform for school - this is down to the hard work and commitment of the team at Happy Jays which we thank you so much for. Kind regards Helen & Ian

A VERY SPECIAL OFFER

Childrens shoe retailer Exclusive Footwear, Gillygate, York are offering parents and staff at Happy Jays 15% discount off their ranges of children's shoes. With brands such as Geox, Ricosta and Angulus they have shoes to fit all budgets. Exclusive Footwear also sell a fantastic range of adults shoes for men and women and they will be happy to accept 15% discount on those ranges too. To claim your discount please mention that your child is at Happy Jays and our staff will happily deduct 15% off all full and sale price stock. You can also shop online and receive your discount at www.exclusivefootwear.com using the voucher code "HAPPY" at the point of checkout. Please note that this discount cannot be used in conjunction with any other offer e.g freeship or registered customer discounts.



EXCLUSIVE FOOTWEAR
YORK