

A Note From Miss Susan

Dear Parents,



Welcome to our next newsletter and the important dates for you to get in your diaries .

A Little Update on the World of Childcare & Terminology

You may have heard a lot of talk about GLD in childcare recently. GLD stands for 'Good Level of Development' and it is used to look closely at children's early years and consider which children are likely to naturally reach a good level of development, and which children might need that little bit of extra input to get there.

Research shows us that whether it is through children's physical, emotional or social needs, possible deprivation in the environment, or simply a lack of opportunity, knowledge or input, the gaps that can be bridged are most effective during a child's earliest years. It is up to us as nursery practitioners to look at every child's individual needs and assess how we can give them the best platform of opportunity for the greatest outcomes in the future.

My staff here at Greenacres are trained to look at each child and create an individual learning plan to ensure we understand how to take those exciting steps towards each child's full potential. This takes real commitment — ensuring staff have the knowledge, understanding and patience to achieve it. Dedicated staff who will adapt activities, provide specialised resources and give time for one-to-one and small group support where needed are essential to really making a difference.

At the end of Reception there is an assessment that looks at 12 early learning goals that we would like every child to be able to meet. My staff use those goals to create small stepping stones for each child in our care, so they can keep working towards them in a rich learning environment, with quality staff around them to ensure that stimulation remains fun, exciting and appropriate to the child's wellbeing.

I recently ran a workshop on how Greenacres can work in conjunction with parents. If any parents are interested in me running a workshop on GLD outcomes and how Greenacres ensures every child's best possible start in life, please flag it up to your manager or key worker and I will create a workshop for the New Year.

I hope our newsletters are helpful and informative, but remember they are also just a springboard for you to find out more or get more involved. I look forward to seeing you for all the exciting winter activities and plans leading up to Christmas.

Regards,

Susan Green

Don't forget to let a staff member know if there is something that you would like to add or have covered in a future edition.

An informative article from Miss Michelle - (Area Manager)

Safer screen use for young children

Less screen time, more play time!



This sentence is such an important message. In our ever-changing modern world, mobile phones, and other electronic devices have become a massive part of our everyday lives, we have become a society that has become dependent on screens. If children regularly see us on devices, they're likely to have a lesser number of meaningful interactions which could have a negative impact on their development.

Evidence shows that screens can have a big impact on children and their development in the early years. Too much screentime is associated with poorer cognitive and behavioural abilities in children, such as reduced verbal activity and reduced vocabulary, and can be associated with developmental delays, reduced attention and lower executive function.



Screen time advice for children aged 0-5



- under 2 years - avoid screen time altogether, other than in exceptional circumstances such as a video call with family/friends.
- 2-5 years - screen time should be limited to 1 hour a day, but less if possible.

Restricting time children spend on screens, supports healthy child development, which requires sufficient sleep, play, real-world interaction and responsive adult engagement.

In our settings, we only use screens for an intentional purpose of specific learning aims and only for short periods of time. We have very few devices available to the staff, as we believe having purposeful interactions will enhance their language and provides a richer learning environment.

Getting outside and having real-life hands-on experiences is far better than sitting on a screen. The children are supervised at all times and are unable to come across any inappropriate material.



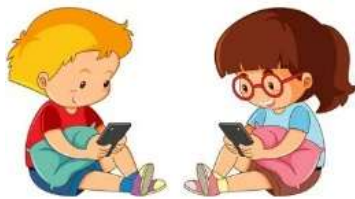
Suitable content and safety considerations

You should consider the nature of any content you plan to use on a screen, to ensure it is safe, age appropriate. You should not allow children to access or use screens alone or with other children without adult co-engagement.

All digital content should ideally be:

- Checked to ensure it is suitable for young children, prior to viewing.
- Slow-paced, repetitive and predictable.
- Advert-free, as young children cannot distinguish between advertisements and other content.
- Free of scrolling and autoplay features.

Avoid children using AI until better evidence is available about the impact of use with early years children.



Practical tips to follow:

- Do not allow children to view screens, without any interaction or communication.
- Only use screens with children for short periods at a time, to protect children's ability to focus and concentrate.
- Avoid using screens with children during mealtimes or within an hour of a sleep period, as this could affect their sleep quality.
- Don't have screens on in the background, as they can distract from communication and social interaction and active play.
- Avoid using screens for routine management or to calm children, as this impacts on children's ability to learn to self-regulate - screens should also not be used to occupy children.

Children with communication needs and Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)

Some children with SEND or English as an additional language may need a more tailored approach when it comes to screen use. This includes children with communication challenges. Screen-based assistive technology can be an important tool to help these children and families communicate, to take part in everyday activities, and create an inclusive learning environment.

Guidance for parents and carers on screen use can be found here: [Baby and toddler screen time guidance - Best Start in Life](#).





Thameside Manager's Message



It has been a busy few months with some of our children leaving for 'big school', some children transitioning into the next room and some new children starting in Bears.

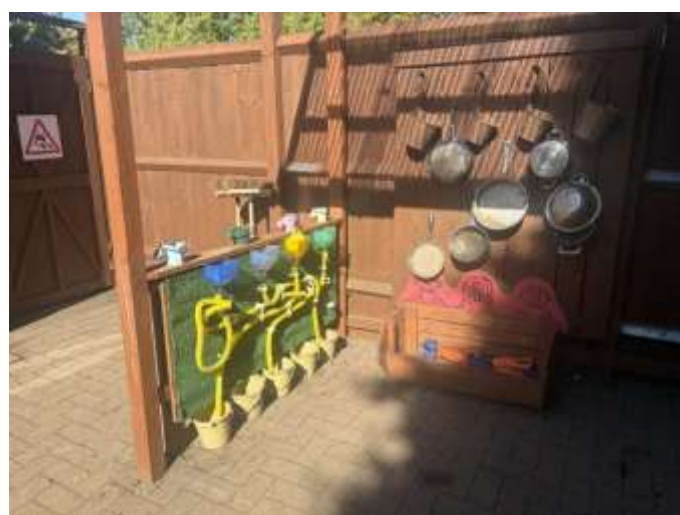
Miss Saina has moved into Explorers to help with the new group of children and Miss Bronwyn has moved back to Thameside to help us in all of the rooms.

Please take note of the Christmas dates in the newsletter, more details and timings will be coming soon.

We have had an amazing revamp of the garden with lots of new resources and equipment for all the children to access and use.

The children learn such a wide set of skills from being outside and we try to access our garden in all weathers so please ensure you bring in weather appropriate clothing such as coats and wellies.

Here are some photos of our new exciting garden and some of the skills your child could learn out there!



Children in early years learn various skills outside, including:

Physical Development: Engaging in outdoor activities like climbing, running, and playing with natural materials enhances gross motor skills and coordination.

Social Skills: Outdoor play encourages cooperation, sharing, and peer interaction, fostering social skills and emotional well-being.

Cognitive Skills: Exploration of nature and the environment stimulates curiosity and problem-solving abilities.

Creativity: Activities such as art projects and nature observations promote creativity and imagination.

Understanding the World: Learning about flora, fauna, and seasonal changes helps children connect with their surroundings and develop a sense of place.



These skills are essential for holistic development and are supported through outdoor play and learning experiences.

Miss Ellen



Christmas Dates for your Diary At Thameside

Thameside Explorers Christmas Concert	Thameside Discoverers & Oldfield Lions Christmas Play	Thameside Christmas Parties
Thursday 10 th Dec	Wednesday 9 th Dec	Wednesday 16 th Dec



Fun in Bears



How music helps a baby learn

Music plays a crucial role in a baby's learning process by enhancing various cognitive and emotional skills.

Boosts Brain Growth: Music strengthens neural pathways, helping babies process sounds, recognize patterns, and improve memory.

Enhances Language Skills: Singing slows down words, making it easier for babies to understand speech sounds and recognize patterns.

Strengthens Emotional Bonding: Singing creates a sense of security and strengthens parent-child bonding.

Improves Motor Skills: Dancing, clapping, and swaying to music enhance motor development and coordination.

Calms Stress: Music can soothe crying babies and create a calming environment for learning.

Engaging with music through singing, playing, and dancing together can create a joyful and interactive learning environment for babies.

Make your own instruments:

Making your own musical instruments is a brilliant way to encourage your child to get creative.

Instruments don't have to be complicated or expensive – if you can shake it, bang it, rattle it and make a noise, it's an instrument!

Dried rice or lentils in an empty bottle makes a great shaker, or you could use a saucepan for a drum with a wooden spoon as a drumstick.



So how can you and your child engage with music?

Here are some easy ways to enjoy the power of music together.

Dance together!

Find ways to perform and make music together.

Sing out loud.

Try teaching new lessons or telling stories in song.

Have regular times of the day when you listen to music, such as in the car or before dinner.



In Bears we have an extra-curricular music session called **Crafty Tales**.

The children gain so many skills from these sessions including;

- Mouth action
- New songs/actions
- Body movements
- New sounds
- Lights
- Waiting for a turn
- Fine & gross motor skills
- Control of musical instruments



Each session is carefully planned by Miss Deva with new skills being learnt and repeated each week.





Explorers Chat

Thameside Explorers - 'Little Cooks'

This term Explorers have been very lucky to explore a new extra-curricular of 'Little Cooks' with Miss Sarah and Miss Ellie.

We have been learning new skills of cutting, grating, whisking, stirring, Scooping, size and measure, sieves.

Cooking with toddlers builds early life skills, improved physical coordination, and encourages healthier eating habits.

Key Benefits:

- **Better Eating Habits:** Children are more likely to try and accept new foods, especially fruits and vegetables, when they help prepare them.
- **Motor Skill Development:** Stirring, pouring, and mixing ingredients build fine motor skills, hand strength, and hand-eye coordination.
- **Early Math and Science:** Counting scoops, measuring volumes, and watching ingredients melt or mix introduce basic academic concepts.
- **Language and Communication:** Talking about textures, smells, and recipe steps expands a toddler's vocabulary and listening skills.
- **Confidence and Bonding:** Completing a simple task gives children a sense of pride, while cooking together offers meaningful family time.





Discoverers Chat

Transition to School

September in Pre-school room always brings big changes with our oldest children leaving for school. We know just how important it is to ensure these transitions happen as seamlessly as possible. That's why we start preparing our children for school from the day that start with us. Many believe that children need to be able to write their name and count to 100 to start school, and although these are great skills to have, the skills they really need are much more important. We teach children from a very early age how to self-regulate, how to understand and deal with a range of emotions, how to take safe risks and be independent and have the confidence to speak out, and these types of skills will benefit them so much more in times of transition. These skills don't start in preschool; they start from as early as the baby room.



We also do a whole range of additional things to help the children to prepare for school such as inviting the school teachers into the nursery to speak about each individual child, this gives the teachers the opportunity to see them in a different environment. We take the children for stay and plays at the schools which offer it.



We write personalised transition forms for every child to ensure the schools have all the information they need to know about the children to help them settle effectively in their new environment. Each year from April we change our role play room into a school, putting out a range of different school uniforms to allow the children to explore their new schools and practice dressing and undressing. We place pictures of their new schools around the room to help them acclimate and become excited about the change ahead.

This year we have introduced a new "ready for school" scheme which works alongside our Spidergraph. Each month we will work on a range of different skills which are fundamental for the transition to school. A few examples of these are practicing washing and drying our own hands and independence in toileting areas, putting on and taking off own coats and shoes, sharing, taking turns and working as part of a team and understanding dangers and developing resilience to bounce back when things go wrong. These types of skills are fundamental for joining a school environment, and as a room we will come up with fun and creative ways to explore each of these skills each month in the lead up to school. Have a look at our Spidergraph to see what skills the children have been working on each month!

September and starting school can bring lots of worries and anxieties in children, and in Discoverers we aim to make this transition as easy and exciting as possible for both the children and the parents, despite how sad we are to lose them!



Why is Space Den an Essential Part of Greenacres?

At Greenacres, our philosophy is centred around ensuring every child is seen as an individual who can be nurtured by our great team.

We ensure free flow, fun, laughter and great experiences so that they gain the best start in life. With this in mind we created the Space Den to give each child these opportunities.



In the Space Den, children are able to spend quality time in small groups and one-to-one. Together we have so much fun with lots of laughter and creativity, with an emphasis on crafts and physical play. We really get to explore what motivates each child's learning. We also love getting out and exploring our environment.

The Space Den has definitely become a big part of the Greenacres programme. It offers a safe place for children to wind down or explore their feelings.

With the lead up to winter and Christmas, we intend to experiment with temperature and sensory play even more. We love to wrap up and go jumping in puddles. We love winter walks and finding out what we can discover. We will be collecting leaves, conkers, sticks and lots more – so lots of fun to be had!



Please feel free to find out more about Space Den and how it might be enhancing your child's learning