

## Dear Parents,

Welcome to another edition of our Greenacres newsletter, packed full of interesting information and an insight to our day here at Oldfield Road.

Each edition allows our staff team to share their wealth of knowledge with you, but please do get in touch if you would like to know more, would like to add to the newsletter or have information you would like us to tell you more about.

## Happy Reading.

### Interesting Information – Play is Learning

Play is learning for children, it is how they get to know their world. Children use play to solve complex problems like grasping a ball escaping from their hands or displaying joy after an accomplishment and frustration when required to repeated try again. Children make noises and the environment responds gleefully, this simple back and forth from loved ones, serves as the foundation for early literacy, self-regulation, hand-eye coordination providing the groundwork for communication, forming friendships, and a deeper understanding that as they grow, their knowledge of the world through playful experiences also grows.



Children have a right to play. Children's right to play is recognised as so vital to their wellbeing and development that it is included in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of a Child (1989). Play both indoors and outdoors is also a fundamental commitment to children throughout the EYFS.

Play is essential for children's development, building their confidence as they learn to explore, relate to others, set their own goals and solve problems. Children learn by leading their own play, and by taking part in play which is guided by adults.



Play helps children find meaning in a world that is getting increasingly unpredictable. From COVID to war and disasters, children are often left to wonder why their surrounding has failed to protect them. Through play, children can find places for experiences they may have a hard time fully comprehending. When children play, their imagination safely explores areas that may be difficult to talk about. Children engage in what Lev Vygotsky referred to as inner speech where they self-talk, assessing what has occurred, what they are engaged in, and possible solutions.



This allows children to release pensive thoughts and map out strategies on how to use play for both fun and problem-solving skills.

Developmentally speaking, play goes through different stages; starting with unoccupied/solitary play during infancy where we see babies putting their hands in and out of their mouth, fully engaged in coordination, sensation, and movement. During toddlerhood, children quickly



move into the onlooker stage of play where they realize other people like them play as well. And they find it increasingly entertaining to see peers playing, from a safe distance. As children enter the preschool years, they transition from the parallel stage of play to associative, where it is more interactive with others. As children become more independent and can articulate their needs, play with peers becomes more common and successfully charged. Free and busy play allows the mind and body to use the environment in a way that responds to

children's ideas and wants. Too much direction from adults' compromises play, encouragement, adding to play sequences, and promoting child-directed activities helps children reach higher levels of cognitive, social-emotional, and linguistic abilities as experience is the driver of development.



Children learn best using their five senses, in a responsive setting, where teachers/caregivers are more invested in

their interests, desires, and abilities. When the environment is developmentally appropriate and culturally relevant, children exponentially advance their understanding of the foundations necessary to acquire advanced concepts in math, science, social studies, and much more.



Play, both indoors and outdoors, makes a powerful contribution to children's wellbeing, development and learning. Children play, not least because it is often fun and offers a joyful opportunity for engaging in many different activities and being with others. As they play children immerse themselves in what most interests them, and in the process find out about themselves, other people, and the world around them. Because play is open-ended and flexible, children can explore and experiment with confidence, take risks and challenge themselves at the limits of their capabilities, without fear of failure.

Play is learning and learning should be play-filled in early childhood education programs now more than ever.

\* Extracts from Birth to Five Matters and [Early Childhood Education Ethiopia](#)



**Recipes** – Here is an example of some of the cooking we do here at nursery.



## Sloppy Joes (Greenacres Style)

This is our take on an American classic.

### **Ingredients**

Beef Mince  
Onions  
Garlic  
Peppers  
Tinned Tomatoes  
Stock  
Chilli flakes  
Cheese  
Ciabatta Rolls

### **Method**

We begin by frying our garlic, onions and pepper until soft. We add the mince until browned and drain off the fat.

We add the tinned tomatoes, beef stock and a little chilli flake and reduce slowly until all the flavours have combined.

We serve our mince mixture with slices of ciabatta rolls and grated cheese.

When eating this dish, you can often here us say 'if you didn't make a mess eating them, you can't have done it right!!'

## Banana Bread

### **Ingredients**

2 to 3 very ripe bananas, Mashed  
1/3 cup (76g) butter, melted  
1/2 teaspoon baking soda (not baking powder)  
1 pinch salt  
3/4 cup (150g) sugar  
1 large egg, beaten  
1 teaspoon vanilla extract  
1 1/2 cups (205g) all-purpose flour

### **Method**

Preheat the oven to 350°F (175°C):

Mash the bananas and add the butter: In a mixing bowl, mash the ripe bananas with a fork until completely smooth. Stir the melted butter into the mashed bananas.

Mix in the baking soda and salt. Stir in the sugar, beaten egg, and vanilla extract. Mix in the flour.

Pour the batter into your prepared loaf pan.

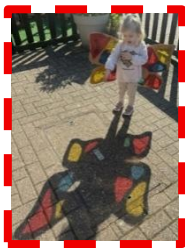
Bake for 55 to 65 minutes at 350°F (175°C), or until a toothpick or wooden skewer inserted into the centre comes out clean. A few dry crumbs are okay; streaks of wet batter are not. If the outside of the loaf is browned but the centre is still wet, loosely tent the loaf with foil and continue baking until the loaf is fully baked.

Remove from oven and let cool in the pan for a few minutes. Then remove the banana bread from the pan and let cool completely before serving.

Enjoy



## What's been happening around the branch



On a bright and sunny morning our amazing tigers headed out into the car park with their beautiful butterfly wings.



We explored all the colours and as the sun shone through the colours, they appeared on the floor, with us seeing our shadows as well as the beautiful full wings.



Over the Easter break we were very lucky to see our Caterpillars arriving. We have been learning all about how to take care of them and watch patiently while they go through the process of turning into beautiful butterflies. We've been saying good morning to them each day and can't wait to see them fly high when they are released.



During our growing topic we have been planting all different styles of plants and seeds. We used cotton wool to grow our cress, kitchen towel to grow our runner beans and compost to grow our sunflowers. We also used some little violas to plant in pots we had decorated. We hope those plants are coming along well at home and would love to see some pictures of how well they are growing.



While exploring our cultural world we were exploring clothing from other cultures. Miss Satwant brought in some beautiful saris and showed us how to wear them. She explained about the different styles and when they would be worn. We loved trying them on and feeling the soft materials.



Recently, our nursery has been filled with a very special kind of excitement as the children took part in our chick hatching experience

This hands-on learning opportunity allowed the children to observe, in real time, the incredible process of new life beginning. We introduced the eggs into an incubator and spoke about how it provides the warmth and care that a mother hen would usually give. From that moment on, the children showed an interest and sense of responsibility, eagerly checking on the eggs each day.



## Out and About

Getting out and about in the early years is crucial because it provides holistic development—boosting physical health, cognitive growth, emotional well-being, and social skills through hands-on exploration of the natural world. It moves children beyond sedentary indoor activities, offering sensory-rich experiences that build immunity, independence, and a lifelong appreciation for nature.



Learning About the World around us by Visiting shops, parks, libraries, or museums gives us Cultural and Community Connection, making a big connection to our local area. It gives us sensory experiences: The sights, sounds, and smells of the outside world are richer than artificial indoor environments, stimulating brain development.

What a fun morning they had exploring the farm - even more special with some sunshine and a special picnic snack. We had lots of fun seeing all the animals, holding some and feeding them! Look how brave we were stroking and petting the animals there!



To start our growing topic, we headed to the garden centre to choose which seeds and flowers we wanted to grow in the garden. We got our compost and some summer bulbs too.



While exploring food during our healthy living theme we headed off to Sainsburys to see what healthy and unhealthy food they sell. We wandered around exploring the sights and smells of the food. We chatted to lovely people doing their shopping and the lovely workers in the bakery. We wanted to buy something healthy so chose a watermelon to bring back with us to share with our friends.

While exploring the world around us we took a stroll around St Marys church to see the beautiful stained-glass windows and huge wooden doors. We went on a grey day but saw the spring bulbs just starting to grow through in the grounds. We loved looking at the building and wonderful architecture.



During the winter months we headed out for a winter walk to the green. It was a bright and sunny but cold day. We wrapped up warm and explored the dew on the grass. We noticed the bark on the trees and felt how bumpy it was. On the way back we noticed a huge tree stump that had a giant hold in it.



On our sensory walk around Hampton Court we wandered through the wonderful gardens, seeing tulips and amazing things growing. We explored the garden kitchen learning about how things grow. After a picnic lunch by the water fountains, we headed into the palace.



After a day at RHS Wisley we were definitely ready for a snooze. We were lucky enough to see the wonderful tulips, water features, huge fish and some wonderful plants and flowers. We stopped for a picnic (and a little rest) before wandering through the trees and up the giant hill.



## Upcoming plans over next few months

We like to explore a range of different themes and topics within our nursery day. Each month we will send you a Monthly liaison letter explaining in detail about the theme for the following month. Each month brings new experiences, conversations, ideas, and experiments. Whilst we have an idea of where we would like to begin, we always let the children guide their learning making each month individual to the children and what they are processing at this point. We would love your input into how we can support your child's learning, here at the nursery and at home and evaluate what they have enjoyed of gained from these experiences, so we can plan and tailor these experiences even more strongly.

Over the next few months, we will be exploring:

- Minibeasts
- Science
- Things that Move
- Summer and Holidays

Any suggestions on any other these topics or others will always be gratefully received.

Watch out for all our BBQ Celebrations, Extra Curriculum and all the summer fun.

## Sensory Garden

Have you seen our gorgeous new sensory garden?



Our Sensory Garden's aim is to help improve emotional regulation, reduce stress, and enhance learning by providing an immersive, hands-on environment that stimulates all five senses. Our sensory garden supports with sensory processing, fostering connections with nature, and boosting social skills, and physical development through activities like planting, watering, digging and using our hands.



It allows us to get out into the sunshine and fresh air and enjoy all that is good about the natural world around us, with a fully immersive hands-on experience. It is

currently filled with lovely herbs that smell great and are growing well. Our hope is these herbs will support us in encouraging Healthy Eating habits as children are more likely to taste food, they have grown themselves, making herbs a great introduction to healthy eating and new flavours. But also gardening in nature is therapeutic, it helps to reduce stress and anxiety in young children and adults alike.



## Cosy Cubs



Role play is one of the most utilised areas in Cubs, where we like to explore the resources and make the most of our imagination.

Role play is crucial for babies and toddlers because it fosters early cognitive development, builds language skills, and strengthens emotional intelligence by allowing them to imitate adults and process the world. It sparks imagination and boosts social skills like sharing and empathy, all in a safe environment. Key developmental benefits of role play for young children include.



**Language and Communication:** Role play encourages children to experiment with new vocabulary, imitation of adult conversations, and improves confidence in expressing themselves.

**Cognitive Development and Problem-Solving:** Pretending to solve problems (e.g., fixing a broken toy) builds critical thinking, memory, and cognitive flexibility.

**Emotional and Social Growth:** By acting out scenarios (e.g., playing "parent and baby"), children process emotions, practice empathy, and learn social skills like turn-taking and negotiation.

**Physical Development:** Handling props, such as holding a spoon, dressing up, or cleaning, helps refine fine motor skills.

**Understanding the World:** It allows babies to recreate scenes they have seen—such as shopping or driving—helping them make sense of daily life and social roles.

Role play can involve dressing up, using dolls, or imitating chores like sweeping, providing a foundation for creative thinking that supports future learning.

Studies have shown that parents who play with their baby can help promote their cognitive development, and as they get older, the children will do better with language and math skills. Play also helps promote physical development. Play will help babies develop their fine and gross motor skills.

Role play for babies (roughly 6–18 months) focuses on simple imitation of everyday actions, nurturing care, and sensory exploration. Examples include cuddling/feeding dolls, playing "telephone" with toy phones, pretending to eat, and using boxes as cars. These activities promote language, social skills, and early imaginative thinking.

### Top Role Play Examples for Babies

**Doll/Teddy Care:** Feeding, cuddling, dressing, and brushing the hair of soft dolls or teddy bears.

**Kitchen/Restaurant:** Using toy dishes to "cook" or feeding a teddy bear with a spoon.

**Telephone Conversations:** Pretending to talk to family members using play phones or plastic phones.

**Car Repair/Transport:** Pushing cars, making motor sounds, or pretending to wash vehicles.

**"Cleaning" Around the House:** Using a small, safe cloth to wipe surfaces just like a grown-up.

**Cardboard Box Adventures:** Transforming a large box into a boat, spaceship, or house for imaginative play.

**Doctor/Nurse:** Using a toy doctor's set to "check" a teddy bears ears or heart.



### How to Encourage Role Play

**Provide Simple Props:** Use real items like safe spoons, bowls, cloths, phones, and hats to boost creativity.

**Model the Action:** Show the baby how to hug a bear or "sip" from an empty cup, as they learn by watching you.

**Add Language:** Narrate the play by saying things like, "Oh, teddy is hungry! Let's feed him," to build vocabulary.

**Focus on Familiarity:** Use activities from their daily life, such as brushing hair, washing dishes, or sleeping

## Tiger Tales



Potty training is an important milestone in your child's development, and at nursery, we are here to support each child through this stage with patience, care, and encouragement. Every child is unique and there is no set age for potty training. Readiness can look different for every child, and it is important that the process happens at a pace that feels right for them.

Some signs that your child may be ready include staying dry for longer periods, showing an interest in the potty or the toilet, telling an adult when they need to go, or becoming aware of when their nappy is wet or soiled. They may also begin to copy others or want more independence in their daily routines. When children begin to show these signs, we gently introduce them to using the potty or toilet in a relaxed and supportive way.

At nursery, we create a calm, positive, and reassuring environment where children feel safe to try. We encourage regular toilet visits throughout the day and use praise and encouragement to build confidence; small successes are celebrated, helping children feel proud of their achievements.

We understand that accidents are normal and an expected part of learning, and these are handled sensitively without pressure or negativity.

We also support children in developing independence by encouraging them to pull clothing up and down, wash their hands, and begin to understand good hygiene routines. These small steps play a big part in building confidence and self-care skills.

We work closely with parents to ensure a consistent approach between home and nursery. Sharing information about your child's progress, routines, and any changes helps us provide the best support. Consistency is key, and working together makes the process smoother and more successful for your child. You can support your child at home by encouraging regular toilet use, offering praise, dressing them in easy-to-manage clothing, and maintaining a calm, positive attitude. Reading books about potty training and talking openly about the process can also help make the children feel more confident and comfortable.

Please ensure your child has plenty of spare clothes at nursery during this time. If you have any questions, are looking for advice, or think your child may be ready, please talk to one of the staff.

## Lions Laughter



Following on from our healthy bodies theme in February we started to explore ways we could support our children in their early years to form lifelong healthy habits.



Children are naturally averse to eating unfamiliar vegetables, but there are tactics that families and practitioners can use to encourage them.

'I hate vegetables!' is a common refrain from children, and one adult's often try to prove wrong, given that eating vegetables can be a great source of essential vitamins, minerals, and fibre. But young children's aversion to them might be entirely natural.

Children are particularly sensitive to taste. Babies are born with around 9,000 taste buds but lose half their taste receptors by the age of 20. Tolerance of bitter flavours develops as we age and our taste becomes less sensitive, but for children, bitter foods can taste particularly unpleasant.



We know babies prefer sweet flavours and naturally reject bitter foods as a protective mechanism. Many of the most nutritious vegetables, like broccoli, have a bitter taste, creating an initial hurdle to overcoming their flavour and fully accepting them.



When children reach two, they start to recognise foods. This can in turn cause a particular aversion to foods that are unfamiliar, known as food neophobia.

It is suggested that a child must be exposed to a vegetable between eight and 15 times before they readily accept it. This means adult perseverance and patience are vital.

The most-eaten vegetables in the UK are carrots, peas, and tomatoes, and while each offer a wealth of health benefits, providing children with a range of options is important.



Food preferences and healthy eating habits learned early in life can track into later childhood and beyond. Children are known to model the behaviours of those around them, so it is important for adults to set good examples during their early years by offering children a wide variety of vegetables as well as eating them themselves.



In responding to children's reluctance to eat vegetables, adults should avoid any kind of bribery or pressure. Parents and carers may resort to trying to get children to eat vegetables through coercion or force-feeding, using treat foods as a reward for eating vegetables, or hiding vegetables in other foods. However, these techniques can result in stressful eating occasions and may cause the child to like the vegetable even less.



Instead, a fun approach to eating vegetables can help children see their greens in a different light. The British Nutrition Foundation suggests encouraging children to learn about vegetables through food-related messy play or songs.

So how do we encourage good happy eating habits in Lions.

Well to begin with our menu is fun and varied. It contains lots of tastes and textures to suit lots of different children.

But just as important is the setting for where our food is eaten. The children are involved in the whole process of mealtimes. They help to collect the shopping and put it away. Mr Peter, our chef, talks to them about the meal he is preparing and what will go into it, they are very excited to go and ask Mr Peter "what's for lunch today?".

The children help to set tables and clear away afterwards. They self-serve their meals, think about portions sizes and how hungry they feel, cut food to different sizes, using their preference of knives, forks, and spoons. The children talk about what fruit they would like and collect it from the fruit bowl, before helping to prepare some of it for themselves.

Milk and water (dependant on which meal) are available throughout to help ourselves to. Research shows that having a drink with your meal rather than before or after, helps your body to digest and process your food.

We eat socially together as a room, adults, and children, chatting and enjoying time spent together while enjoying the meal.



We do lots of cooking activities and messy play, to allow the children to explore the textures and smells of food, while also learning about the cooking process and how food can change. Exploring foods, how it grows, where it comes from and how it gets to our plates can really change the concept of food and the ideas of giving new foods a try. We love to explore everything food based in Lions from visits to the supermarket, garden centres, cooking different recipes to playing and exploring the textures of different foods, cooked and uncooked.



In many of our activities we used utensils that can change and show us how foods can be changed or discovering their properties. An example of this would be our pestle and mortars with our herbs or our juicers with all the yummy citrus fruits. Using these utensils allowed us to see what happens to these foods, feel them on our hands, smell the beautiful scents and see the vibrant colours.



And most importantly, it is calm and relaxed, we don't rush our meals, giving time to eat and digest our food at a happy table setting.



## Space Den

“Come, Explore our Space Den!”



Hi, I'm Lisa, I'm so excited to share how much we're loving our new Space Den at the top of the Oldfield Road building! We designed Space Den for those moments when children need a calmer, smaller-

group experience. Some children visit for one-to-one time, others come in little groups. It's a bright, colourful, fun space – but it also has a quieter corner when normal nursery life feels a bit too busy.



What happens in Space Den?



- Sensory + messy play – for curious hands and brains
- Soft zone – safe space for big physical feelings + movement
- Talk + language time – we go out exploring, then come back to chat about what we

saw or take some time to do board and card activities.

- Downtime – cosy spots to chat and reset when it all gets overwhelming



Each child's key person shares their next steps with me, so I can work alongside parents and staff to explore how to maximise experience.

Sometimes a different space, or a different adult, gives children a fresh way to learn.

Come and see it!



Greenacres is turning 30 soon and Space Den will be open for you to explore. Pop up during our celebrations, have a look around, and ask me anything about what we do here. I can't wait to show you this wonderful space.

See you soon,



## Policy update – Attendance

*Greenacres aims to promote regular attendance and emphasize its importance for future learning and development. As a setting we uphold a welcoming environment, create a culture that values good attendance and work in partnership with parents to address any barriers to attendance.*

Regular attendance and punctuality establish good habits from the start. It provides structure and simple routines that help young children to take full advantage of the learning and development available to them. Through regular attendance, children build up the secure attachments they need for healthy development. A regular routine supports children to feel settled and secure; continuity and consistency are important contributors to a child's well-being and progress. Children learn and develop more from birth to five years than at any other time in their lives. Research shows that children who regularly attend early years settings have better early academic attainment and social-emotional well-being than those who do not attend. Good attendance in the early years creates healthier patterns of attendance for school.

As part of our curriculum our staff are committed to providing the best education and experiences for the children. To support us to do this we anticipated children to be in the setting for their sessions unless the absence is unavoidable (e.g. illness or emergency) or previously planned such as a holiday.

There will be times when your child needs to be absent from nursery and to support our daily routine and concern for your family, we ask parents/carers to provide an explanation via phone call on the first day of absence, by 9.30am. If your

absent is planned, please let us know in advance on the phone or at the door.

If we don't hear from you, we will make every effort to contact the parent/carer on the same day. If contact cannot be made, the absence will be followed up when the child returns, as we carefully monitor attendance, ensuring all absences and the reasons for them are recorded.

We understand there can be barriers to attendance and will do everything in our power to support families wherever we can. Please let us know of any difficulties or changes in circumstances that may affect their child's attendance and or behaviour in nursery, for example, bereavement, divorce/separation, incidents of domestic abuse. This will help the nursery to identify any additional early help that may be required.

Some children are more likely to require additional support to attain good attendance, for example, children who are vulnerable, have a medical need or EHC plan.

We recognise that sometimes families may need extra support with attendance, therefore effective communication is essential between the parent and the nursery. The setting will collaborate with parents to support good attendance; we may create a personalised action/support plan to address any barriers to attendance.

Funding is provided through the local authority. This is public money and we have a duty to ensure it is used appropriately. If a place has been reserved but is being used for less than 75% of booked sessions, we reserve the right to offer that place to another family. This way we can be sure to use the funding to its best effect. Monitoring of attendance and use of government funded hours may be passed on at the local authority's request.

# From our Foyer

## Breaking down the EYFS

### What is the Early Years Foundation Stage?

Welcome to the **Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)**, which is how the Government and early years professionals describe the time in your child's life between birth and age 5.

This is a very important stage as it helps your child get ready for school as well as preparing them for their future learning and successes. From when your child is born up until the age of 5, their early years experience should be happy, active, exciting, fun and secure; and support their development, care and learning needs.

Nurseries, pre-schools, reception classes and childminders registered to deliver the EYFS must follow a legal document called the Early Years Foundation Stage Framework.

### What is the EYFS Framework – why do we have one?

The EYFS Framework exists to support all professionals working in the EYFS to help your child, and was developed with a number of early years experts and parents.

In 2012 the framework was revised to make it clearer and easier to use, with more focus on the things that matter most. This new framework also has a greater emphasis on your role in helping your child develop.

It sets out:

- The legal welfare requirements that everyone registered to look after children must follow to keep your child safe and promote welfare.
- The 7 areas of **learning and development** which guide professionals' engagement with your child's play and activities as they learn new skills and knowledge.
- Assessments that will tell you about your **child's progress** through the EYFS.
- Expected levels that your child should reach at age 5, usually the end of the reception year, these expectations are called "**Early Learning Goals (ELGs)**"

There is also a guidance for the professionals supporting your child on planning the learning activities, and observing and assessing what and how your child is learning and developing.

### What does it mean for me as a parent?

Ensuring my child's safety

Much thought has been given to making sure that your child is as safe as possible. Within the EYFS there is a set of welfare standards that everyone must follow. These include the numbers of staff required in a nursery, how many children a childminder can look after, and things like administering medicines and carrying out risk assessments.

Quality

You can find out about the quality of your child's nursery and other early years providers in relation to the EYFS Framework by checking what the Government's official inspection body for early years, Ofsted, has to say about it. You can find this information at [www.ofsted.gov.uk/inspection-reports/find-inspection-report](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/inspection-reports/find-inspection-report)



## Magnets can rip holes in your child's gut



Magnets can be great fun. But it's really dangerous if a child swallows them.



They can attract to each other inside the body, cut off the blood supply and tear holes in the gut.



A child may need major surgery to remove them. So, keep them away from young children. And teach older children the risks.



If you suspect a child has swallowed magnets, get medical help straight away.

[capt.org.uk](http://capt.org.uk)

[@ChildAccidentPreventionTrust](https://www.facebook.com/ChildAccidentPreventionTrust)

[@capt\\_charity](https://www.instagram.com/capt_charity)

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## No Birthday Cakes Please!

Dear Parents,

After much deliberation, we would like to keep you informed of our new birthday celebration policy. I have been uncomfortable for some time in the practices that often occur in schools and nurseries around birthday cakes, where parents bring cakes and sweets to give out to their children's friends and classmates to celebrate their birthday.

These are a few of my reasons...

- 1) We are part of a healthy eating accreditation scheme, which means that we avoid the access to unnecessary high sugar foods.
- 2) Many of our children are unable to eat certain cakes due to dietary restrictions and are therefore excluded from this practice.
- 3) Cakes made at home give us no control over ingredients, the way it was cooked, stored or hygiene practices.
- 4) I would prefer to reduce the message to children that celebration has to involve foods that aren't particularly the best choice for our health.
- 5) Most bits of birthday cake wrapped in a napkin and held in little hands on the way home are usually disappointingly inedible at the point of consuming (and very messy in a car on the way home)

Now you may feel that I'm a bit of a killjoy, but I hope that you will trust me to mark and celebrate your child's birthday (if it falls on a nursery attendance day) with just as much fun and excitement.

If your child is at nursery on their birthday please alert their keyworker or staff team and we will...

- ★ Sing Happy Birthday to them with their friends whilst marking their special day with a hat, medallion or other representation.
- ★ They will take home a chosen birthday card to show their family, alongside a balloon or similar celebration to make them feel special on their special day.

I hope that you might all agree, support and encourage this new policy by not bringing cakes or sweets into the setting. We would hate to disappoint any child if the provision then needs to be taken home again.

Thank you for your help.

## Mr Men – How children learn



### The Characteristics of Effective Learning



Who have you been in your learning today and why?

Mr Happy & Miss cheerful	Mr & Mrs Busy	Mr clever & Little Miss Brainy
<b>Playing and Exploring</b>	<b>Active Learning</b>	<b>Creating and Thinking Critically</b>
I am curious Join in with open ended activities Take part in make believe and pretend Engage in role play Initiate activities Learn by trial and error	Maintain focus and not get distracted easily Keep trying when challenges occur Show satisfaction in meeting goals Being proud of how I accomplished something Enjoy meeting challenges	Think of ideas Find ways to solve problems Find new ways to do things Make predictions Developing grouping sequences, cause and effect Check how well my activities are going Planning and making decisions about how to approach a task, solve problem, reach a goal Use language of thinking and learning: think, know remember, idea, plan, learn, make sense, trying to do, or figure things out.



## Safety reminders

**New advice for parents on screen time for young children** - Department for Education - 27 March 2026 - Early Years

Screens are part of everyday life for young families. With 98% of two-year-olds watching screens daily, avoiding them altogether isn't realistic — but managing them well can make a difference to how young children grow and develop. Here's what you need to know about the government's new free guidance for parents.

### **Why is the government publishing advice on screen time now?**

Over a thousand parents were asked what support they needed, and the message was clear: families want practical, non-judgemental guidance on how much screen time is too much and how to limit any negative impact on their children. This new advice is the government's response to that call.

It has been developed with input from parents and an expert panel led by Children's Commissioner Dame Rachel de Souza and Professor Russell Viner, a paediatrician and specialist in children's health.

### **Why does screen time matter for children under five?**

Ninety per cent of children's development happens before the age of five. Large amounts of unmanaged screen use can crowd out the activities that matter most at this stage — things like sleep, physical play, creative activities and time spent talking with parents and carers.

Research by early years charity Kindred Squared found that 28% of children starting reception are unable to use a book properly, with some trying to swipe or tap physical pages like a tablet screen. Giving children time away from screens in their early years helps build the social, emotional and language skills they need to start school.

### **What does the guidance recommend?**

For children under two, the guidance recommends avoiding screen time other than for shared activities that encourage bonding, interaction and conversation. For two- to five-year-olds, parents are advised to aim for no more than one hour of screen time a day and to keep screens out of mealtimes and the hour before bed.

When it comes to content, slow-paced, age-appropriate programmes can support early childhood development better than fast-paced, social media-style videos. Parents are also encouraged to watch screens together with their children — talking, asking questions and engaging with what's on screen. The evidence shows this kind of co-viewing is linked to better cognitive development than children watching alone.

The guidance also makes clear that these time limits shouldn't apply in the same way to screen-based assistive technologies used to support children with special educational needs and disabilities.

### **Are there simple things families can do to cut down on screen time?**

Yes. The guidance suggests straightforward swaps to help build healthier habits — like reading a bedtime story instead of watching a programme before sleep or playing a simple game at mealtimes rather than using a device. These aren't about perfection or judgement, but about giving parents the confidence to make small changes that can have a real impact.

### **Where can parents find the guidance?**

The guidance is free and available on the Best Start in Life website. It will also be available in person through Best Start Family Hubs, hundreds more of which are opening across the country, bringing parenting advice, services and community support closer to the families who need them most.

## Knowledge on Hand

Teething in babies: signs, remedies, and a teething chart - CBeebies Parenting

It can be difficult for babies and challenging for parents too, but teething is a normal milestone in your little one's development.

"It's a different experience for everyone. Some babies will sail through the experience, others will find it more difficult," says health visitor **Kerry Bennett** from Better Start Bradford.

"Getting through it is all about being in tune with your baby and **recognising their individual cues**, so you can pick up on their discomfort and respond to them."

### What is teething?

Teething is the process of your baby's first teeth pushing through their gums. They are sometimes called milk teeth, baby teeth or primary teeth.

In total, children usually grow 20 milk teeth – 10 on the top and 10 on the bottom.

"We use the word teething to describe the time it takes for all these teeth to emerge," explains Kerry.

### When do babies start teething?

Although it can be earlier or later, most babies will start teething around 6 months. By 12 months, most babies will have their first teeth.

"By the time they're between 2 and 3 years old, most children will have all of their milk teeth," adds Kerry.

"If you are worried about how your baby is developing, speak to your health visiting team or local wellbeing clinic for reassurance."

### Average age for teething

Most babies start teething at around 6 months old.

### Late teething

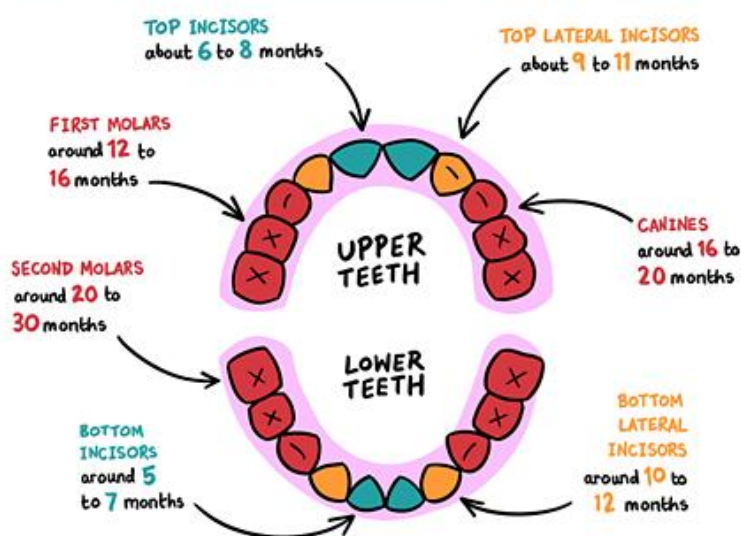
Some babies will start teething later than 6 months old and sometimes after 12 months old.

"Babies born prematurely or with a low birth weight may develop their teeth later than other babies," adds Kerry.

### Teething chart: Timeline and tooth order

"Usually, the first teeth to emerge are the bottom front two (bottom incisors) but there's nothing wrong if they come through in a different order," explains Kerry.

### BABY TOOTH ERUPTION CHART



**MOST CHILDREN WILL HAVE ALL OF THEIR MILK TEETH BY THE TIME THEY ARE BETWEEN 2 AND 3 YEARS OLD.**

Here's what the NHS offer as a rough guide...

- bottom incisors (bottom front teeth) – these are usually the first to come through, usually at around 5 to 7 months
  - top incisors (top front teeth) – these tend to come through at about 6 to 8 months
  - top lateral incisors (either side of the top front teeth) – these come through at around 9 to 11 months
  - bottom lateral incisors (either side of the bottom front teeth) – these come through at around 10 to 12 months
  - first molars (back teeth) – these come through at around 12 to 16 months
  - canines (between the lateral incisors and the first molars) – these come through at around 16 to 20 months
  - second molars – these come through at around 20 to 30 months
- When do baby teeth fall out?

“Children start to lose their baby teeth when they’re around 6 years old,” says Kerry.

It takes a few years after this for all their adult teeth to emerge – they won’t lose their final milk teeth until they’re around 12 or 13 years old.

### **Common signs of teething**

“Before teething symptoms start, when you’re feeding your baby, you may notice that their gums are a slightly different colour. They may seem whiter or more translucent, which is the teeth getting ready to emerge,” says Kerry.

“If they’ve started weaning, so around 6 months, you may notice that they’re opening their mouth more.

“They may be exploring their face, around their jaw and pulling at their ears to understand what’s happening in their mouth.

“And they may want to clamp down on your finger more or put things to their mouth more than usual.”

### **Physical and behavioural symptoms of teething**

Some babies will not experience pain or discomfort, but common symptoms include:

- **Sore and red gums.** When they’re opening up their mouth, you may see swelling and redness on their gums. “There shouldn’t be ulcers or blisters but you may see raised bumps,” says Kerry.
- **A mild temperature – but not a fever – and a flushed cheek.** “If your child’s got a fever, you need to understand what’s causing it and respond to it rather than putting it down to teething.”
- **Gnawing and chewing.** “They may want to gnaw and chew on things for some relief.”
- **Dribbling more than usual.** “And this can cause a rash on their face – this is called teething rash.”
- **More fretful or whiny than usual.** “This is because they’re experiencing real discomfort.”

You may notice your baby is out of sorts in other ways. Their sleep patterns may be disrupted.

“Although evidence doesn’t suggest teething causes diarrhoea, I know from my own experience that some babies will get looser stools and a bit of a sore bum,” adds Kerry.

### **When to start brushing baby teeth**

Start brushing your baby’s teeth when they emerge.

“You may be worried their gums are too sore or too sensitive, or think their teeth aren’t big enough but don’t delay brushing your baby’s teeth,”

### **Choosing the right toothbrush and toothpaste**

Brush twice a day, just before bed and one other time in the day. Brush all sides of their new teeth.

“Use a soft baby toothbrush and a smearing of baby toothpaste and do small, gentle circular motions over their emerging teeth,” says Kerry.

Always check the packaging when you’re selecting a suitable toothpaste.

“Baby toothpaste should contain around at least 1,000 ppm (parts per million) fluoride,” adds Kerry.

### **Visiting the dentist: When and why**

Teething is time to think about registering your baby at your dentist and getting them used to the environment there too.

“Their first visit might just be sitting on your lap in the dentist’s chair,” says Kerry.

Your little one will have their milk teeth for years – they won’t start losing them until they’re around six years old, so looking after them is a must.

“The health of your child’s teeth can affect their confidence, how and what they eat and their speech and language development, so it’s really important to start healthy dental habits early,” adds Kerry.

Teething often lasts until your child is 2 or 3 years old, when they have all 20 of their milk teeth

### **When should children brush their own teeth?**

Start brushing your child’s teeth as soon as their first milk teeth appear.

The NHS recommends that children can start to brush their own teeth at **seven years old**.

### Clinical psychologist Dr. Martha Deiros Collado gives her expert tips to help your little one feel confident starting school and making friends...

'Shyness' has nothing to do with sociability. It is a sign of deep self-awareness and the need for extra time in new situations. Rather than labelling your child 'shy', consider reframing this as cautious, thoughtful, or 'slow to warm'. With patience, gentle encouragement, and the right strategies, you can help your child feel safe, steady, and confident as they enter the school environment.

Starting school brings a lot of change: new people, changes in environment (including new toilets, dining room and play areas), and extra sensory input (noise, movement, and new routines) can be overwhelming.

*It's normal if your child feels unsure, clings to you, or hesitates to join in. What they're communicating is that they need time to feel safe before they step forward.*

Accept and assert that it is okay to be feeling the way they do. When children learn that their experience is okay, it reassures them that their feelings are valid and temporary, rather than something that needs to be fixed.

Confidence grows from practice in safe, manageable. Show your child the school. Walk, drive or use public transport, whatever you'll be doing when school starts. Just peeking into the playground can help reassure a child about the new environment. If you cannot physically visit, make sure to show them photos online.

Talk about what they can see, what looks familiar and what looks new. Visualise what a school day might feel like. Use stories, books and TV series where characters experience going to school for the first time, such as Bluey's 'First Day' episode and Dodge's Pup School. This can help your child visualise the experience of going to school and open up conversations about any worries and hopes they may have.

Give your child simple language for low pressure interactions. Asking "Can I play with you?" can feel daunting, as there is a chance the answer will be "no".

Keep it simple and use phrases that will spark engagement from other children without the pressure of being accepted or rejected. *Respect their pace. Some children prefer to stand on the sidelines before joining in. This helps them gather information about what's happening and who feels safe.* Trust your child's process, observing is part of building the confidence to join in.

If you are worried that your child's slow to warm temperament might hold them back at school, don't hesitate to speak with their teacher and plan early on. A thoughtful start will have a better outcome.

Explain what helps your child feel safe. "She might not join in at first. It might help if she had a role in the classroom that made her feel valued, like helping to give out materials or leading the classroom to the dining hall."

"He's more comfortable one-to-one than in big groups."

Ask about buddy systems. Many schools pair children together for group work. Having one safe child in the classroom can ease tension and help a child open up more easily.

Do share with your child the things you have told their teacher might help them. When you do, you're sending the message: "Your feelings matter, and teachers are here to help."

### **Trust your child's process**

Rather than thinking of 'shyness' like something you have to fix, think of it like two children standing at the edge of a swimming pool. One might jump in feet first, while another will wade in slowly.

Either way, both end up in the water swimming and splashing. The same is true for children starting school.

If your child is slow to warm, they might spend the early weeks quietly observing and taking everything in. It's okay if your child isn't a social butterfly. They might be more like a tortoise, taking careful steps forward at their own pace, or like an owl, watching and listening before joining in. Trust their process.

Your child doesn't need to be the loudest in the room to succeed at school. All they need is to feel safe, seen, and supported as they begin this new chapter of their life. Once they feel ready, they will explore, interact, and find their own school identity.

## A Note from Miss Susan – Happiness



One workshop with Dr. Andy Cope made me rethink everything about happiness, leadership, and the energy we bring to Greenacres every day.

I'm lucky – we already have a brilliant, caring, committed team here. But a recent workshop called Being Brilliant with Dr. Andy Cope challenged me to think: how do we take “great” and make it even greater?

Dr. Cope had been tasked with looking at why mental health struggles are so high today. Instead of starting with what's going wrong, he flipped it: what about the small percentage of people who are (truly) happy?

What does truly happy even mean? We all said the usual things – positive, excited, motivated, successful. But the real answer was simple: you know a truly happy person instantly, because they make other people happy. They walk into a room with a cheery smile, genuine interest in others, excitement for what's next.

Dr. Cope's research suggested only about 2% of people live like that day to day. That 2% is powerful, because happiness feeds down. What if the secret to transforming any workplace wasn't another policy, but nurturing more of that 2% – more people choosing to be truly happy? And at Greenacres, I don't want to settle for 2%.

Because here's what I know: happy staff create a happy workforce. A happy workforce creates happy children. And happy children grow up influencing a happier world. This is big.

Dr. Cope also talked about “mood hoovers” the “could be better”, “hate Mondays”, “nightmare” energy that drains a room. We don't have that here. But as leaders and as parents, we're always the first influence. If we drag ourselves out of bed muttering “Ugh, I've got to go to work”, we teach children that work is something to dread. If we show up with energy, curiosity and joy, we teach them the opposite.

So my mission isn't to fix something broken. It's to build on something wonderful. To help our already fantastic team protect and grow their happiness – not fake, 100% happy-all-the-time, which Andy calls “toxic positivity”. Real happiness. The kind you don't reserve for later, for the weekend, for some special occasion.

He'd asked children what they wanted to do with the next 20 to 30 years of their life. They were buzzing – so excited, motivated, full of ideas. When he asked adults, too many were filled with dread, focused on what wasn't going to happen. The happiness had been zapped out of their lives already!

But as Andy says, happiness isn't “over there”. It's not in the future. Life is the special occasion. We can choose it right now.

Childcare is hugely responsible work. Long hours, and never as much pay as we'd love to give. But it's also joyful, meaningful, and important. And happiness, like Andy says, can be a virus. The smiles, the enthusiasm, the great communication, the can-do attitude, the praise, the laughter – it spreads.

We've already got that bug at Greenacres. Now let's make it a Greenacres virus.  
Watch this space everyone.

## A Note from Miss Michelle – Well-Being in the Modern World

Growing up in this modern world that we live in can be extremely tough, there seems to be a lot more stress and mental illness in adults these days, more than there used to be. Over time we have all learnt strategies to get through life, how many of you go home after a busy day at work getting through the day and then release that tension when you get home? Either having a glass of wine, relaxing in a hot bath or having a rant to a partner. Taking time for your well-being and learning ways to be resilient, bouncing back and to self-regulate are very important, as much for yourself, as it is for your children. Some children, as they grow up, learn strategies to manage and to release the tension when they get home, this is called masking, this can start as early as in their early years.

**So, what is masking?** Masking refers to the act of hiding or suppressing natural behaviours to fit in with 'social norms', most commonly in girls and neurodivergent children. A child can manage all day, 'holding it together', they're well behaved, compliant, getting by, fitting in with learnt or copied behaviours. When they get home to their 'safe place', they release the effort of holding in their discomfort all day, they may:

- \*Have emotional outbursts or become dysregulated
- \*Be exhausted, burning out/crashing, falling asleep really early.
- \*Not listening/ignoring/answering back/being defiant, saying 'no' answering back/attitude or shouting.
- \*They may appear quiet and not want to talk about their day.

And you the parents can get the negative behaviour, as much as it's not nice for us, children

need to release the feelings that are bottled up, we need to be able to support this process, which can be very tough on you, keeping yourself regulated at the same time, especially if you are asking them to do something or to stop doing something.



### Why do we mask?

\*Social acceptance -to fit in, not to be judged

\*To meet expectations-to conform to adult expectations, to get praise.

\*Survival mechanism (fight or flight)- becoming overwhelmed, to avoid negativity.

The effects of masking can cause internal stress, increased anxiety. We should be aware of signs of anxiety in children's early years. It is essential to support children's well-being and to help them to manage their emotions. At nursery we create calm spaces inside and outside offer sensory resources, use visual aids and work with you at home, using the same consistent strategies. Providing the language for them to be able to talk about their feelings and frustrations and for them to understand that having 'a go' and not getting it right the first time is ok. Giving a child time to recover, if they become distressed, to validate their emotions and to make them feel secure. We need to teach children the skills to be able to regulate their emotions for their future life as adults, we are their role models.

Articles to read for further support:

[When 'good behaviour' hides a struggling child | Babies and Children](#)

[Understanding Masking | Kids Charity](#)



**Song time**– We are always enjoying new songs and rhymes, here are a few of our favourites at the moment.

### Little Peter Rabbit

Little Peter Rabbit had a fly upon his nose,  
Little Peter Rabbit had a fly upon his nose.  
Little Peter Rabbit had a fly upon his nose,  
So he flipped it and he flopped it  
And the fly flew away.

Powder puffs and curly whiskers,  
Powder puffs and curly whiskers,  
Powder puffs and curly whiskers,  
So he flipped it and he flopped it  
And the fly flew away.



### Tommy Thumb

Tommy Thumb, Tommy Thumb,  
Where are you?  
Here I am, here I am,  
How do you do?  
Peter Pointer...  
Toby Tall...  
Ruby Ring...  
Baby Small...  
Fingers all...



### Wheels on the Bus

The wheels on the bus go round and  
round, round and round, round and  
round,  
The wheels on the bus go round and  
round, all day long.  
The wipers on the bus go swish...  
The horn on the bus goes beep...  
The people on the bus goes up and  
down...  
The bell on the bus goes ding...  
The doors on the bus go open and  
close...  
The driver on the bus goes move  
along please...  
The conductor on the bus goes  
tickets please...

# Gallery Fun

