

Short Term Planning for January 2013

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
14 Headcount Week for Early Years Entitlement Funding	15	16	17	18 19 Parent's Open Morning 9am-1pm
21 Senior Management Meeting 6.15 - 7.30	22 Level 4 Leadership & Management, Exeter, Denise <i>Chris to cover school runs</i>	23 Level 4 Leadership & Management, Exeter, Denise <i>Chris to cover school runs</i>	24	25 Burns Night 26 Australia Day 26 Parent's Open Morning 9am-1pm
28	29	30 Superhero Day Don't forget your cape and pants!	31 SENCO Training Torrington, Estelle Denise to cover	1
4	5	6 Characteristics of Effective Learning Ivybridge Sadie & Estelle Lara & Denise to cover	7	8 10th Chinese New Year, Year of the Snake
11 Full Staff Meeting 6.15-7.30	12 Letters & Sounds Passage House Sadie, Jade & Lara to cover	13	14 Valentines Day!	15
18 Half Term Grafton is open but no Early Years Funding this week	19 Half Term Grafton is open but no Early Years Funding this week	20 Half Term Grafton is open but no Early Years Funding this week	21 Half Term Grafton is open but no Early Years Funding this week	22 Half Term Grafton is open but no Early Years Funding this week

Our daily Jolly Phonics sessions have been a massive hit with the children so much so that they have been asking to practice their phonics in the morning and again after lunch! This month we are learning S, A, T, I, P & N. We shall be regularly sending home some homework sheets for the children to complete at home, please check you child's bags for them. Please allow your child to complete the pages themselves, so that they can practice their pencil holding skills, and practicing the correct letter formation for the letters S, A, T, I, P & N.

Can we remind the children that we are happy for them to occasionally bring in an item to show during our daily circle time sessions, however after circle time it must go back into their bag for safe keeping. With up to 24 2, 3 and 4 years olds we hope you can appreciate that they can't all have a turn everyday, sorry. However learning to take their turn is a good lesson which we all have to learn.



Grafton Childcare

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Superheroes, Cupcake Cafe, Winter and Family Trees

Following our staff meeting on the 7th January, we thought we would dash off a quick short newsletter to let parents know what we have planned for this half-term with your children.

We had a long chat about all of our Key Children's current, interests and fascinations using the information you had supplied via your child's My Favourite Things pages for December and came up with short-term plans to hopefully keep the children interested and fully engaged over the next few weeks.

In November and December the children all really enjoyed our Post Office which we'd set up in the Role Play area and our very own Santa's Workshop which we had made by transforming the Kid's Shed. We would like to thank all of the parents of both children and staff who provided us with lots of lovely resources to use in our two themed areas, you are all outstanding and so generous to us thank you.

We have put our thinking caps on and devised plans to convert our Role Play area into our very own "Cupcake Cafe", lots of the children were given home-corner role play items for Christmas and have been excitedly telling us about it during our Circle Time sessions going into great depth describing all of the fun they have been having at home baking imaginary cakes for their siblings and parents to



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Please remember to send a Warm Waterproof Coat Every Day Thank You!





consume. We would like to thank Nyah's mummy and Halifax Bank, who very kindly gave us some giant cut out cupcakes which are just spot on for helping to set the scene in our new "Cupcake Cafe". We plan on baking real cupcakes the children can eat hopefully there will be some left for them to take home. We shall also be creating ones the children can use as props in our Cafe.

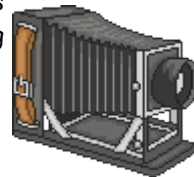
We plan to convert our Kid's Shed into a Superheroes Den complete with lots of Superhero outfits for them to make a quick change should they need to do some Superhero Deeds whilst enjoying being outside with their peers. As part of our Superheroes theme we intend to have a **Superheroes Day on Wednesday 30th January**. When if your child would like they can come to Grafton dressed as their favourite Superheroes as will those members of staff who are brave enough to wear their knickers on the outside of their trousers for the day! Should make for some very interesting photos for the children's Learning Journals.



The over two's, three's and four's have also been chatting lots about different family members many of whom they have seen over the Christmas Holidays. To link into this we would like to make a very small photo family tree with each of our Key Children. Could we please ask that you send in some photos of your child's immediate family which your

child is able to cut up for their own creation. This could be siblings, mummies, daddies, grandparent's, aunts, uncles and cousins. It would be really helpful if you could write names onto the backs of the photos as well. If you don't wish us to cut up your photos, perhaps you could email us some copies which we can then print off here for the children to then use to create their very own masterpiece.

This activity will help the children to develop a sense of their own immediate family and relations. Learning that they have similarities and differences that connect them to, and distinguish them from, others. We shall be talking to the children about their friends, their families, and why they are important to them. By sharing photographs of children's families, or other favourite people we will help to support the children's understanding of difference and of empathy by using props such as puppets and our empathy dolls to tell stories about diverse experiences, ensuring that negative stereotyping is avoided.



New Toys & Resources

During the Christmas break Phil our cook and general handyman installed two new double floor easels from yes you guessed it Community Playthings. We have attached one to the walls in each conservatory, the one for the under two's is right on the floor and the one for the over two's placed slightly higher up for them underneath the kitchen window of next door. The toddlers can reach from the top to the tray, the children can attach their own paper using the extra strong magnets which came with the easels and the paint trays remove easily for clean-ups. But the easels have a hidden secret the whiteboards are magnetic and if we flip them around they have a chalkboards on their backs.



You can't have failed to notice that we have moved the large rapid racking shelving in the conservatory to the end, this has given us so much more space for the under two's to enjoy more creative and messy play and once they have finished it has given us much more room for us to put up the lunch tables for the big ones to all eat together around the same large table. We have noticed since doing this that they are really engaging in some lovely conversations and enjoying their table top games and puzzles sessions which we do just after lunch as they now have more table top space to spread out their puzzle and games pieces.

To encourage lots of outside play no matter what the weather is doing we have invested in 22 sets of 100% waterproof and windproof Bib and Brace sets from Muddy Puddles, in camo green and pink. They are perfect for keeping the toddlers and children clean and dry all year round. The versatile, sleeveless design means they can wear with a t-shirt for summer fun and add layers on chilly days. The Bib and Brace design is generously sized to allow maximum flexibility and comfort, so our play days are never cut short because it's wet and muddy!



The children are already becoming very adapt at getting them on and off. Denise had them on her wish list, but at £24.50 a pair were a very considered investment, however in their January sale the camo colours had been reduced down to only £8.00 a pair so she decided to have a splurge. We have also bought 8 new pairs of new art coveralls for our budding artists and mucky pups, well they are all doing so much more painting now we realised that our old ELC coveralls had had it! The versatile, Muddy Puddles coveralls do exactly what it says on the tin; keeps clothes clean when kids get dirty. Whether painting or colouring, we love the fact that the Velcro fastening at the back goes all the way down to the bottom and the elasticated cuffs prevent spillages entering sleeves, with extra soft tape around neck area for extra comfort, they are just perfect.

cardboard box can become a castle or rocket. Your child might also want to act out superhero stories using miniature toys, so it is worth investing in small-world people and vehicles, again, simple and flexible toys are best.

Books, Superhero ABC by Bob Mcleod, Max by Bpb Graham and Avocado Baby by John Burningham will make great bedtime reading for your superhero. Superworm by Julia Donaldson is a firm favourite here at Grafton at the moment!

If you're feeling apprehensive about your child 'playing superhero's with their friends, remember this kind of play may appear loud and aggressive, but it is, in fact, full of storytelling and co-operation. View the children as actors in a play, rather than as real adversaries, and don't confuse a child's fantasy role with their real personality.

You will need to set rules, though, particularly around the kind of rough-and-tumble that you will accept. Explain that superheroes always use their powers wisely and agree that if anyone feels unhappy during play-fighting, they will say for example. 'Stop, I don't like it!', and the playing will stop. Providing enough capes, masks and so on should avoid any real arguments breaking out.

Many parents are uneasy about gun play but you'll probably find that your superheroes are more likely to have magical powers than guns. We used to ban gun play, but found the children would take up the roles and 'weapons' regardless. At Grafton we recognise the importance of superhero play and provide props for the children to play with.

It's always a good idea to head for the garden or a park, maybe with a climbing frame. The children will relish the space to run around and challenge themselves, and there's no fear of them knocking things off a shelf!

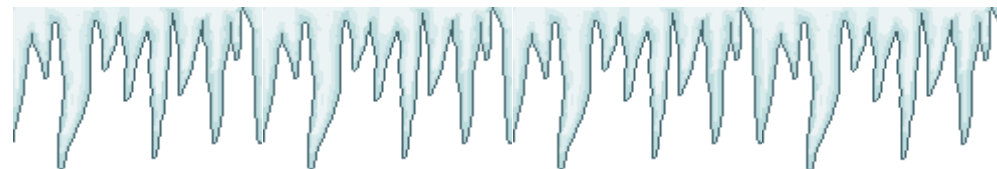
And join in if your child and their friends want you to and find out about the great stories that they've been creating.

Thank You

We would like to say a huge thank you again to the parent's of the following children:- Bobby, Lewis, Lottie, Charlotte, Jacob, Kenzie and Charlie, who have donated a Little Tikes Road & Rail set, Jam Jars, Rapunzel Dress, 3 Hats & Role Play Items, a huge sack of Toys, carrier bags and junk modelling items.

Wow Cards & Calpol

Please remember to continue to send in your wow cards from home so that during our circle time sessions we can share your child's achievements, it really is wonderful for their self-esteem and lovely to learn a little about what amazing things they all get up to when not at Grafton. Please check that you don't need to replenish the sachets of Calpol in your child's A5 folder, please note the use by date on them as some of them are close to their expiry date, thank you.



For the under two's we have planned lots of lovely sensory experiences loosely linked to our Winter theme making lots of use of our two Tough Spot trays which Estelle, Jade, Zoe and Chris intend to fill with Shaving Foam, Gloop, Shredded Paper and Ice, although not all at the same time and lots of our small world play items to bring our Arctic Areas to life and add another dimension to the babies and toddlers sensory role play.

We shall be engaging the babies in varied physical experiences, such as bouncing, rolling, rocking and splashing, both indoors and outdoors. Encouraging them to use resources they can grasp, squeeze and throw. Encouraging them to notice other babies and children coming and going near to them. As well as providing lots of novelty in the environment that encourages them to use all of their senses and move indoors and outdoors. We shall be offering lots of low-level equipment so that the babies can pull themselves up to a standing position, shuffle or walk, ensuring that they are safe at all times, while not restricting their explorations. Providing arctic tunnels, snowy slopes and low-level steps to stimulate and challenge toddlers in our Wintery outdoor play area. Yes we really do have a wild imagination!

Parent's Open Mornings

This is a quick reminder that on Saturday the 19th & 26th January, we shall be holding our Parent's Open Mornings. These are for parents to come along and have a good look around the setting at what has changed over the past few months and take a peek at all of our lovely new resources and equipment which we are sure your children must have mentioned at home or we have enthused about during recent newsletters.

You will also have the opportunity to look at your child's individual Learning Journals and chat to either Sadie, Estelle or Denise about the progress your children are making here at Grafton Childcare. We each only have 12 slots, some are almost full! We shall be offering 20 minute appointment slots starting promptly at 9 am and finishing at 1.00 on both Saturdays. We hope as many of you as possible will take this opportunity to come along so that we can share with you all of the wonderful things your children have been doing and get a snapshot of some of the exciting things we have planned for 2013.

If you have not yet booked your appointment you need to do so a.s.a.p., just ask when you sign you child in or out next week. Or you could send Denise a quick email and she can let you know which slots are remaining.

Toilet Training Policy

When you feel your child is ready for toilet training, we ask that you begin this training at home during a minimum of four days holiday. We will then follow through and encourage your child while in our care. Toilet training can only be done in a relaxed manner with the full co-operation of the whole family. We ask that your child must be at least 2 years old and must be showing signs of readiness. When your child is ready, the process should go pretty quickly. We suggest that your child should be kept in pants at all times. Putting a child in nappies part time, pull-ups part-time or pants part time, can be very confusing and delay the training process.

Please keep in mind that the activity level with us can distract your child from responding to an urge to use the toilet, more so than at your home. Therefore, we will continue to use nappies until your child can and will announce that (s)he must use the toilet or potty (not just at home, but here, as well) and can control his/her bladder and bowels for a few seconds beyond that announcement. Parents will need to supply six pairs of pants, plus six sets of extra changes of clothing each day, don't forget the socks, during the first few weeks whilst beginning toilet training.

If your child is dry during the day, but not at naptime we will continue to use our own washable nappies for your child to sleep in during our rest periods. During toilet training, we ask that your child be dressed in "user friendly" clothing, as much as possible. The best items are shorts and jogging bottoms with elastic waists. Try to avoid really tight clothing, trousers with zips or buttons at the waist, and dungarees. These are difficult for children to remove "in a hurry".

Occasionally children do have accidents. When this happens the children will be treated with the greatest respect, there will be no form of punishment what so ever, that is likely to distress the child any form of distress can hinder the child's progress and thus lead to further accidents.

If your child does have an accident then the child will be taken to one side and then be cleaned up and changed discretely, offered lots of cuddles and then will go back to continue what ever activities your child was participating in before the accident. The soiled clothes will be sent home with the parents on collection unless we are due to do laundry when they will be washed for you. If they are sent home please don't forget to replace the spare clothes as we do not keep any other spare clothes on the premises other than those supplied by yourself.

Reviewed and Updated January/13

Superhero Play

Don't be surprised if one day, your three or four year old wants to don a cape and rush off to catch some baddies. And don't be alarmed either. 'Superhero play' can appear to be aggressive - and might even include 'weapons' but it should be harmless play fighting, and there is much that your child can learn from it.

Age and Stage

'Superhero play' is a favourite with three, four and five-year-olds, and though more popular with boys than girls, girls do act out superhero stories as well. Children imagine being all sorts of 'goodies' and 'baddies'. As well as caped crusaders, like Batman, or action heroes, like Ben 10, they also enjoy pretending to be characters like martial arts experts, knights and aliens. Witches, princes and princesses also count.

It's the power and strength that your child will find so appealing. By this stage, they are becoming more aware of the 'scary' wider world, while you, the grownups, are still making all the important decisions about their lives. Putting on a cape or taking up a magic wand to zap a villain lets them feel in control.

Importance

Pretending to be a superhero will give your child the courage to explore:

- ☉ their fears, and abilities
- ☉ 'good and bad'
- ☉ danger and new experiences, even
- ☉ life and death

And it's all within the comfort and safety of your own home or garden. Superhero play will also help your child to:

- ☉ make friends and learn how to solve problems - saving the world takes a lot of thought and co-operation
- ☉ understanding other peoples feelings, by taking on the roles of champion, villain, even 'victim', and
- ☉ learn lots of new language through their superhero stories.

Superhero play also satisfies some children's desire for rough-and-tumble, with its harmless wrestling, kicking and rolling around.

Play and Learning at Home

As your superhero might be a knight today and an astronaut tomorrow, there's no point in buying specific costumes and toys. Ideal are simple home-made capes, just add Velcro fasteners to pieces of material at neck and elbow level, as well as masks and belts or cuffs. Cardboard tubes and small plastic bottles make great 'weapons'; a tent or sheet of material are ideal for hideouts; and a sturdy