

Short Term Planning for November & December 2011

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
31 Dayle Annual Leave	1 Staff Planning Meeting 6 – 7 pm Dayle Annual Leave	2 Dayle Annual Leave	3	4
7 Our Pets Topic for Under 2's	8	9	10	11
14 Creating a Pudsey Spotty Banner & Bags, Cookies & Chocolates	15 Senior Staff Meeting 6–7 pm	16 Baking Pudsey Cookies & Chocolates	17 	18 Remember to Wear Something Spotty, Baking Pudsey Cookies & Chocolates
21 Road Safety Week,	22 use our resources to reinforce the message	23	24	25 (27th) 1st Sunday in Advent
28	29 Senior Staff Meeting 6–7 pm	30 St Andrew's Day Scotland	1	2 Grafton will be Closed , Early Years Conference –Speaking Your Mind, Dawlish.
5	6 Staff Planning Meeting 6 – 7 pm	7	8	9
12	13 St Lucia's Day Scandinavia	14	15	16 End of Term for EYE Funding
19 Jade Annual Leave	20 Hanukkah Jade Annual Leave	21	22 Yule/Winter Solstice Jade Annual Leave	23 Grafton Closes at 7pm & reopens after Christmas on Tuesday 3rd January 2012. Jade Annual Leave

We are sharing our Short Term Planning sheet for your info, as part of our ongoing working in Partnership with Parents. Parents can help us by regularly completing the "My Favourite Things In... Have Been" pages and Parent Quick Note sections, remember the info which you supply helps us to specifically gear our plans towards the current interests and developmental needs of your own child. Our focus over the next few weeks so far will be Fireworks, Children in Need & Advent. We will plan a whole host of other activities for the children including just a few of the following items listed at our staff meetings. All of which will nicely link into Problem Solving Reasoning & Numeracy and Creative Development which will be our Developmental Matters, Skills & Processes focus for this half of the Autumn Term. Watch out for those codes! Please note when your child's Keyworker is on Annual Leave.



Grafton Childcare

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November Extra 2011

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Well we are sure that you cannot of missed the fact that Friday 18th is BBC Children in Need day. We have planned lots of spotty crafty and fundraising activities with the children across the whole week, which will link in very well with this half terms focus on Problem Solving, Reasoning and Numeracy and Creative Development. We shall be focusing on using lots of number names, matching numbers during play, recognising groups of objects, lots of counting activities many of which will have a spotty theme!

On Monday 14th we shall be starting our week long spotty theme and encouraging all of the children to create a spotty banner as well as their very own bags in which they will be bringing home their cookies and Pudsey shaped chocolates later in the week.

During the week we shall be making some spotty cookies and Pudsey shaped chocolates for the children to sell to their families! We are hoping that parents will feel able to donate £2 towards these. Grafton will be donating the cost of the ingredients, so 100% of the money raised will go to charity. This year 75% will go towards Children in Need and 25% towards STARS. Syncope Trust And Reflex anoxic Seizures (STARS) works together with individuals, families and medical professionals to offer support and information on Syncope and Reflex Anoxic Seizures. We currently have one child Lilli who we care for who suffers from these seizures and would love to be able to support this charity in some small way.

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Please note that Grafton Childcare will be **CLOSED** on Friday 2nd December, whilst all staff attend the Early Years Conference 'Speaking your mind' in Dawlish.



Children in Needs & Stars

On Friday 18th we are encouraging all of the children to show your spots and wear at least one piece of spotty clothing, for which we hope parents will again feel able to donate a £1.

We shall also be running a sweepstake for parents to guess what Pudsey will bake for his cake sale, again at £1 a guess.

Please send in all donations in a sealed envelope with your child's name & your total donation written on the outside, it will save us having to rattle tins and give us more time to have lots of spotty fun and games.



A Week of Spotty Fun & Games

Monday 14th	Creating a Pudsey Spotty Banner & Bags, Cookies & Chocolates for which we would like a £2 donation please.
Wednesday 16th	Baking Pudsey Cookies & Chocolates for which we would like a £2 donation please
Friday 18th	Remember to Wear Something Spotty, Baking Pudsey Cookies & Chocolates for which we would like a £3 donation please

We shall also run our parents sweepstake all week when parents can pay a £1 to guess what cake Pudsey will bake, look out for the poster which will be on display on the conservatory window. Maximum donation per child £4, unless you are feeling extra generous of course then please give as much as you can afford, thank you.

2nd Parent's Open Day, Friday 2nd December

Our Parent's Open Day on Saturday 29th October was a huge success with 32 parents popping along to have a good look around at all of the improvements we have been making here at Grafton as well as time to sit down and look through their own child's Learning Journal's and discuss any Next Steps which we have planned for their child.

Sadly we were not able to accommodate every parent who wished to come and take a peek, so on Friday 2nd December, when Grafton is closed for the day anyway, Denise will be available to show around those parents who were disappointed to not get the opportunity beforehand. The appointments will be between 10 am and 2 pm, and a timetable has been popped up in the conservatory for parents to indicate which time slot they would like.

Donations of Resources

Donations of toys and resources help us keep our costs down, so if you have any of the following items on hand and are willing to donate them, it would be greatly appreciated.

- Dressing up clothing child sized not old adult clothing, costumes, hats etc.
- Magazines that depict other cultures, old birthday cards etc.
- Paper of any kind, brown, white, coloured, waxed, foil, Christmas colours would be very useful next month, etc.
- Crayons, water colour paints, or any misc. art supplies, such as fabric scraps, glitter, pipe cleaners, paper plates, etc.
- Any odd shaped boxes or packages, especially if you can get a dozen or so of the same size and shape, maybe from your place of work, we are very happy to help you recycle, these come in very handy for our junk modelling.
- Used padded envelopes, any size or amount.
- Anything that you think we might find useful for arts and crafts, just ask if your not sure.
- Any non treated wood, i.e. an old tree which we can chop up for our wood burners, we need extra this year as we are in the process of having one installed next door! Phil has a small chainsaw, so is happy to come and chop any large logs into moveable pieces!

During this build up to Christmas time and just after when making room for all of your new gifts, please think of us before throwing out all that ribbon that wrapped up those parcels. We would love to have all of those fancy bags which your gifts came in, not only can we make use of the fancy paper but also the cord handles.



Thank You

We would like to say a huge thank you again to Lottie's Daddy who regularly supplies us with a lovely big bag of crafty bit's including the most beautiful ribbons and laces which we often make use of when carrying out various crafty activities and not forgetting her Mummy who very kindly dug out two lovely wooden egg cups and a wooden spoons from the back of a kitchen cupboard for us to add to one of our new Treasure Baskets.

We would like to thank Sophie's Mummy for the carrier bags and who thought of us when she was trimming a roller blind and gave us the off cut, which we imaginatively used as a banner which the children added their handprints to and it is now on permanent display on the lounge wall for all to admire.

A big thank you to Aoife and Boann's Mummy and Daddy for letting Phil come and remove a tree from their garden which they had cut down. This will supply us with a couple of weeks worth of free firewood for our two wood burners so thank you very much girls for thinking of us.

We would like to thank Charlotte's Mummy who often supplies us with allsorts of bits and bobs for our junk modelling, your a star thank you.

We would like to thank Matthew's Nanny who gave us a bag full of cones of wool, which we can use when doing crafty stuff, thank you for thinking of us.

Oh and not forgetting Ricky for the endless supply of craft paper and pallets for our open fire and more recently for the lovely wooden highchair and vintage ladybird books which we have laminated for some of our SEN children to enjoy.

It is because of these ongoing generous donations that the children are able to create such wonderful masterpieces to be taken home and admired by one and all.



Heuristic Play

Having looked at 'treasure-basket play', in our last newsletter I am now going to look at how this type of play can be developed with toddlers into something known as 'heuristic play'.

The term 'heuristic play' comes from the Greek word to 'discover', while incorporating the idea that children will be playing. As with treasure baskets, this type of play is credited to Elinor Goldschmied and Sonia Jackson, who wrote and lectured about it. So, why is heuristic play used in settings and, more importantly, how might you provide it at home?

It is one of life's little ironies that two-year-olds often enjoy playing with the box rather than the toy inside. This interest in real objects rather than toys is key to understanding why toddlers will often concentrate and learn more from heuristic play rather than from toys alone. So, what might you see here at Grafton when we provide heuristic play? The answer is quite simple: junk!

Clean, safe junk, of course. But nonetheless at first sight an arbitrary collection of bits and pieces of different sizes that might otherwise belong around the house or in the recycle bin. Metal tins, plastic bottles, curlers and wooden curtain rings are typical of materials that might be set out. Anything other than toys. What makes it fascinating to watch, though, is the way that toddlers sit, focus and find interesting things to do with the bits and pieces that have been set out for them.

Here at Grafton heuristic play might be put out each day or several times a week. We will be setting out 'piles' of material so that each toddler can have their own collection. This is because while many toddlers are interested in others, they are not yet good at sharing and negotiating. Having a separate collection for each child, therefore, means that each child can focus, concentrate and explore alone.

As with treasure-basket play, the role of the keyworker is not to organise the play, but to 'sit back' a little so that the toddler can be totally independent. This is often a time when your child's keyworker will carry out observations on your child as well as supervising them for obvious safety reasons.

There are huge benefits for toddlers when this type of play is available. Firstly, it is a good way for them to feel independent of adults and to do exactly what they please. Toddlers also develop good hand-eye co-ordination and also concepts of shape and sizes. They also learn about the properties and textures of the materials that they are handling, for example, that fabrics do not make a sound when dropped into a saucepan, but corks do. Perhaps, most of all, heuristic play helps toddlers to concentrate and persevere. These are life skills of untold importance!

Heuristic Play Continued...

You may be reading this article and seeing that, in some measure, your toddler is already doing a bit of heuristic play at home. This is not surprising, as toddlers almost naturally seem to be interested in everyday objects. If you wish to create heuristic play, though, the key is to look out for groups of objects so that your child has plenty of different combinations and so, multiple opportunities.

Below are items that work well, but note that this is not an exhaustive list:

- metal containers such as saucepans and empty food and biscuit tins in various sizes (make sure that the edges are not sharp);
- plastic bottles of various sizes, kitchen roll holder;
- fabrics of different textures and sizes;
- plastic bracelets, cardboard tubes, hair curlers and spoons.
- lids from bottles, saucepans and tins, rubber plunger, corks, shells, wooden rings, wooden and plastic clothes pegs; and



If you do decide to provide heuristic play at home, it can be worth watching them and making a note of what seems to be of interest to your child so that you can add related items. If you let us know your findings via your child's Daily Dairy we can use the information for our own individual planning for your child.

One thing that you are likely to notice is that your child often repeats movements and ideas over and over again. This is normal play behaviour for toddlers and the key thing is to provide sufficient items so that they can do this. Below are some common ways in which toddlers interact with heuristic play: Putting things in containers. Many toddlers love dropping things into containers. They may drop corks into plastic bottles or drop wooden pegs into tins. Their interest in putting things in and out of containers means that it is worthwhile

Educate The kids - Jouaurabi School, Utange Nr. Mombasa

The Educate The Kids charity was started in 1998. In 2002 after much fundraising land was donated and a purpose built school for 256 pupils was opened. The old school buildings then became a Kindergarten for 300 pupils. Later an Orphanage was built beside the Primary School. Now in 2011 there are approximately 650 children plus teachers.

In 2007 a choir plus teachers came to the UK fundraising visiting schools and churches etc. In 2008 a choir came again, Denise can remember the children visiting Stover School and their voices were amazing. The children were away from Kenya for three months were aged between 7 and 16 years. The Aunty of one of the children who attends Grafton became more involved in 2008 as they hosted 2 male teachers for the month they spent in Burnham. They visited many schools, churches etc and raised around £20,000 there during that month.

All the children who go to school are sponsored, clothes including shoes are taken out to Kenya. Many fundraising events and donations mean that sometimes we are able to give the children a school dinner. The children do not have all the luxury that our own children have in the UK, but they are very happy. You don't see any pushing when anything is being given out. They are all eager to go to school from 4 years old. Some children walk 4 or more miles to get to school each day along dusty tracks.

This is just a little bit of background about the Jouaurbi School, Lewis Aunty is collecting any school trousers, shorts and skirts, which your children have outgrown, even if they are a bit worn. They are parcelled up and sent out to Mombasa a couple of times a year and the school have a pretty amazing team of seamstresses who can convert and repair the old clothing to be used by the children.

So for those parents who have school aged children, could you think of us when your child has gone through the knee again on their school trousers, before you throw them into the bin. Please could you pop them into a bag and pass them into us here at Grafton and we will save them up and pass them onto Lewis' Aunty for sending out to Mombasa a couple of times a year Thanks.



Allsorts

Most of our over two's three's and four year old's are now spending most of their day over in the new rooms and areas. But they pop back over in the Playroom, Dinning Room and Lounge lots during the day as well.

Combined with this is the fact that most of the floors in the new side are either laminate or varnished floorboards, in the last two weeks we have had a number of minor mishaps with children slipping on the bare floors in their socks and stockings and one fairly impressive nosebleed!

We do not permit any of the children to wear shoes or boots inside the house and request that your child keeps a pair of slippers here at Grafton for them to wear during the day, inside and when popping between the two buildings. This not only prevents them from slipping on the shiny floors, but also stops their socks getting damp when popping between the two buildings and keeps are carpeted areas clean as well.

If you have not already done so please please please can you supply us with a pair of either clearly labelled slippers or plimsoles (without laces) which you child can wear here to prevent any mishaps, thank you.

Can we also remind all parents with children still in nappies, that we may only apply nappy creams and ointments to your child during changing if you have supplied us with a tube to use specifically on your child. If you have a particular brand you would like us to use, then please pop it into your child's Daily Diary folder we shall remove it and pop it into our cubbie in our changing area for use solely on your child as and when your child's keyworker feels it is needed.

Quality Books Direct

Our local Quality Books Direct distributor has again left us with a lovely assortment of books for parent's to have a flip through and see if there is anything they might want to order for their child.

The highlight this month is a set of 5 quality paperback books for £4.00 which make up the lovely Mr Bear series these would be lovely in any child's Christmas Stocking.

There is also a lovely set of three "Cars" Books which make sounds, although they might not be so popular on Christmas morning.

Please feel free to look through the book box in the conservatory and indicate on the sheet any books which you might like to order. Denise will add the cost of any orders to November's invoices to make things easy.

Heuristic Play Continued...

putting out a range of containers of different sizes, as well as smaller objects that can fit inside.

Banging, many toddlers love making noise! Sound is a great source of stimulation for children so, if you can bear it, put out some metal containers such as biscuit tins and tin lids so that your child can explore different sounds.

Moving things from one place to another. Many toddlers enjoy the sensation of taking things from one place to another. You may find that if you put out several containers, your child may well 'pour' items from one tin or box into another. They may also enjoy walking around carrying their prized items. Through talking to other members of staff and general observations, it emerged that we many of us felt there was a need to develop purposeful, planned activities outdoors. Such planned activities were already available for our under twos in the form of heuristic play, using treasure baskets and heuristic baskets. However, there were no such planned activities for three and four-year-olds. So, we have decided to develop our own heuristic type of play for the over twos outdoors.

For this area to be effective, the 'rules' of heuristic play will still need to be in place. For example:- the play should be led by an adult with the adults feeding the children's interests and there should be sufficient objects for the children and these should be presented in an attractive way.

We plan to try to introduce all these resources to groups of children on a regular basis using heuristic play conditions, starting with the three- and four-year-olds and then moving on to the two- and three-year-olds. Using the whole of our outdoor areas. Plans are afoot to develop our outdoors heuristic play further over the coming Winter months, so if you have not yet supplied us with a pair of wellington boots to keep here at all times, plus also remembering to send a warm waterproof coat each

day, both are really are a must if you wish your child to be able to be fully included in our outside fun and exploration. Our new decked area and pond in the front garden is developing a pace we can't wait to let the children loose outside.



School Admissions for 2012/13

Devon's application facility for Primary School places in September 2012 is now open and will close at midnight on 15th January 2012. Children born between **1/9/2007** and **31/8/2008** will require Primary School places from September 2012, although parents may defer entry, they must apply by 15th January 2012 to be considered for a place.

Start dates can be discussed with Schools once offers have been made. Late applications will not be considered above timely ones where schools are oversubscribed. **Please apply on time!** Details of the school offered will be sent by email on the morning of 15th April, 2012, followed by a hard copy letter, sent 2nd class post.

There is a single offer point of September, but parents can defer or delay. Devon's admissions team will offer all places on **15th April** for a September start. Parents can negotiate start dates direct with the school later in the process, if a delay is desired.

Devon are striving to reduce the number of late applications and the consequent distress to parents and children when they aren't offered their local school, or the school their siblings already attend.

Statutory school age, your child must be in full-time education by the start of the term following their fifth birthday, but this does not mean that they have to be in education before then. As parents when you are offered a place for September you have the following options:

1. Full-time admission to Reception,
2. Part-time admission to Reception up to the statutory school age,
3. Part-time attendance at Grafton Childcare or another pre-school setting while deferring a place in Reception.

But you cannot take a part-time place in Reception and free Early Years Entitlement Funded place at Grafton Childcare or another pre-school setting. Neither can you take a free full-time Early Years Entitlement Funded place at Grafton Childcare or another pre-school setting, although you could arrange for additional pre-school hours but would have to pay for them.

As a parent, you have the right to defer your child's admission until statutory school age, at the beginning of the term following their fifth birthday, even though you will have been offered a place for the previous September. This is a decision for you as a parent to make. We would advise you to take all factors into account including advice of the head of the Early Years Foundation Stage at the school and the Head of Grafton Childcare, Denise Tupman.

School Admissions for 2012/13

Not all four year olds will have reached the required levels of self-confidence, self-esteem self-care and emotional development to attend full-time school from September, this is why Devon previously offered a Two Point entry system of September and January!

If you wish to defer admission, you must inform the school which has been allocated. **That place will be held open up to the start of the term after your child's fifth birthday within that academic year by the school, and will not be offered to another child.** However you must inform the school in writing of your intention to do so, otherwise your child's place may be withdrawn and offered to another child.

Child's fifth birthday	Can defer until
1 September - 31 December	January
1 January - 31 March	January OR April, the start of the Summer Term
1 April - 31 August	January OR April OR the next September with a fresh application for a Year 1 place.

We hope that we have explained the admissions process and things are a little clearer for you all. However if they are not or if you would like to discuss in more detail whether or not it might be in the best interests to defer the entry of your particular child into full-time education particularly for those whose birthdays fall between the 1st January and the 31st August, either drop Denise an email or pop a note into your child's Daily Diary and we will make an appointment to discuss your child's admissions arrangements more fully.

But either way please remember you must apply for a place as normal online at **www.devon.gov.uk/admissionsonline** or on the Devon Common Application Form by the deadline of 15 January 2012. Remember Places will be offered to start in September but parents may wish to defer until the term of the child's 5th birthday.

Remember no decision about this is needed at the time of application. But not applying in time can severely disadvantage applicants for oversubscribed and popular schools.