



'Time flies when you're having fun' and this couldn't be more true given that we are already at half term!

The first part of our new academic term has whizzed by and, despite life being unconventional to say the least at the moment, this has not prevented the staff and your children from making the most of the learning experiences across our 10 sites.

In this edition, we will be taking a closer look into the life of our children in their settings, along with some activities to complete at home based around the theme of autumn including recipes, crafty ideas and things to do out and about. As well as this, our focus in this edition will be based around children's independence.



Well-being

Your children's well-being has been at the heart of all of our staff during the pandemic and they remain dedicated to ensure that everyone feels they can share their concerns and worries relating to COVID-19. Circle times, the key worker system and providing a safe, secure and stimulating environment are all ways that the children are supported to strengthen their personal, social and emotional development. You might find this sheet helpful to use at home with your child to help them feel better when they have difficult feelings. Talk about a time when your child has had a difficult feeling – sad, angry, annoyed, jealous or scared. Discuss different things they do to help themselves feel better using the suggestions on the sheet as a prompt. Ask your child to choose their top three strategies or ask them to suggest others. Keep this on display at home so when your child is having a difficult feeling, they can help themselves to feel better.



FEATURE ARTICLE—PROMOTING CHILDREN'S INDEPENDENCE

Independence is an essential life skill and one that needs to be nurtured from an early age. The term is often understood to mean a range of skills, from helping children to be apart from their families to developing skills in dressing and encouraging them to think for themselves. In fact, all aspects of independence are important for children to learn to be self-sufficient individuals.

During these uncertain times where parents/carers are not allowed to enter settings during

the COVID-19 pandemic, it is essential that our staff are able to support the children in developing their independence right from leaving their parents on the doorstep. Our practitioners continue to be patient and encouraging towards the children, praising them for their achievements which gives them the confidence to try more new things independently.

SO WHAT SKILLS ARE YOUR CHILDREN LEARNING TO SUPPORT THEIR INDEPENDENCE CURRENTLY?

Patience and concentration—waiting outside of the nursery can be a difficult skill for your child to master, especially when they are so used to being able to come straight in to their morning session. Being distracted by something they can see around them or holding a conversation with their friend nearby, being listened to and knowing that you understand and recognise their frustration of the situation and singing songs can all help to develop your child's patience.

Self-help—this skill has had to increase faster due to the nature of the circumstances but your child is already learning essential self-help skills. Carrying their bags in to nursery, knowing where their peg is and where their lunchbox goes, washing their hands independently or with support are all self-help skills that once mastered become second nature.

Co-operation and self-trust—children do learn that as much as they want to do things when they want, this is not always possible and other people's feelings have to be taken in to account. Working together and respecting each other so that everyone achieves their goal is essential for the smooth running of family life. There is a huge emphasis on self-trust with the children currently—they are so used to their parents/carers settling them into their room. The relationship and trust formed between the child and their keyworker are essential now more than ever to support the settling in process. The strong relationships and our online learning journey systems ensure that parents/carers are kept informed of their child's time spent at nursery regardless of the limitations.



"The greatest gifts we
can give our children are
the roots of RESPONSIBILITY
and the wings of
INDEPENDENCE."
maria montessori

Activities to support independence at home

Under 2's

- Use your brightly coloured adult socks to put on your little ones feet and let them have fun pulling them off. Have you got some different hats? Use both yours and your child sized hats and let them practice putting them on and off.
- Allow your child to play with plastic pots and pasta, scooping it up with a range of utensils. This will be a key skill for when they learn to feed themselves, strengthening their fine motor muscles.
- Encourage your child to be responsible for giving their family members their cutlery before a meal. Support them in handing a knife, fork and spoon to each person sat at the table.
- Show your child how to put their rubbish in a bin. Place scrunched up newspaper and clean tissues around your home within easy reach for your child and ask them to help 'put the rubbish away'.
- Play games where your child has to put balls or toys in to a box or container. This will help them develop an awareness of tidying away.



2's-3's



- Use your brightly coloured adult socks and let your child practice putting them on. They will find it easier to put these on than their own little socks and they will be practicing the skill for the future.
- Encourage your child to transfer dried kidney beans from one pot to another. These skills are essential for strengthening their fine motor skills which aid with being independent at eating times.
- Help develop your child's awareness of place settings and which order they should go. Use a place setting mat with the outline of the cutlery as a guide if necessary.
- When cleaning your house, allow your child to use the vacuum cleaner to help Hoover the floor.
- Introduce the 'tidy-up' song (<https://www.bing.com/videos/search?q=tidy+up+song+for+early+years+children&qpv%3Dtidy+up+song+for+early+years+children&view=detail&mid=AE76419C1907AA326C33AE76419C1907AA326C33&FORM=VRDGEAR&ru=%2Fvideos%2Fsearch%3Fq%3Dtidy%2Bup%2Bsong%2Bfor%2Bearly%2Byears%2Bchildren%26qpv%3Dtidy%2Bup%2Bsong%2Bfor%2Bearly%2Byears%2Bchildren%26FORM%3DVDR>) and then carry out a tidy up session.

3's and up

- Musical dressing up. Choose some fun upbeat music. Then sort out different sized clothes (such as your child's own clothes, older siblings clothes and some adult ones). Pop on the music and see how many layers your child can they put on before the music stops. Can they then remove the layers before the next song has finished?
- Give your child opportunities in the bath or at the sink where they can practice pouring water from a jug into a small cups or multiple cups. Use language relating to measure such as full, half full to encourage them to be independent when accessing drinks.
- Using a child friendly knife, encourage your child to be helpful with cutting up fruit or vegetables to have with tea.
- Provide your child with size appropriate dustpan and brush to help sweep up after a meal. Give them a cloth and child-friendly cleaning spray to let them clean the table after eating.
- Ask your child what needs to be tidied away in your house or in their bedroom and tell them you are going to count to a number and see how long it takes them to clear their toys away.



OUR MISSION STATEMENT, VISION AND VALUES

Over the years, we have strengthened our mission, vision and values to ensure that they are at the heart of all that we are and do. Our ultimate goal is to nourish each child's sense of wonder by experiencing and gazing at the world with them. They help each one of us to share in their excitement and see it through their eyes. South Hills also recognises that the learning journey is not just for the children. Together, the staff grow and learn and this comes from a workplace of trust, respect and admiration.

'South Hills Nurseries are dedicated to developing curious minds from the tiniest to the tallest members in our awe inspiring environments.'

(mission statement)

Supporting each individual in our community to reach their full potential.

Our families have a sense of belonging and are respected.

Uniqueness is valued and celebrated.

Together we empower greatness through fun, play and excitement.

Happiness underpins the motivation for lifelong learning.

Holistic care ensures that each child thrives.

Inspirational teaching is at the heart of every experience.

Loving and caring relationships enable all to flourish.

Learning celebrates each individual's journey.

Safe and secure ethos promotes independence, resilience and well-being.

As we grow as individuals, our **vision** and aspirations for the company grow too.



*These **values** are central to the work we do with our children and their families every day. The roots of South Hills Nurseries are established and our tree has grown where all experience friendship and celebrate life creatively.*

Wilton—We have welcomed everyone back & have had a fun and busy couple of months. Fitness fun, French with Nicola and Music Jo have returned and it is lovely to hear the children singing and dancing again. Poppy, Sunflowers & Daisies have explored the track & woods, collecting autumn resources and using them to make models of their faces as part of their topic on our bodies and then adding leaves, twigs & conkers to their autumn displays. Barn 1 have been on a trip to Langford Lakes



to explore and discover different habitats and they had the opportunity to experience pond dipping, paddling in the stream and identify different breeds of birds using the look outs. Barn 2 have cared and looked after our new duckling 'Winston', ensuring they fed & gave him lots of cuddles and when he had grown enough, moved him to his new home on the field. And the Baby Unit have explored nursery rhymes, weather, shapes and space through learning & singing new nursery rhymes, reading books and completing lots of messy craft.



Bemerton—Rabbits—This term we have been building the children's confidence by showing their work on the display boards. The children took part in national pirate day by painting a pirate ship, dressing up as pirates and hiding treasure in shaving foam. We have focused on Autumn and looked at the leaves and how they've changed, created Hedgehog collages and made acorns using our handprints. We have looked at shapes and played some matching and recognition activities and games. We have incorporated national space week into our planning and have created aliens for our space board. We've also explored our senses, in particular touch and have felt different fruits and vegetables and printed with them. The children really enjoyed exploring the Halloween pumpkins, feeling and smelling the seeds.



Squirrels—We have concentrated on developing and furthering our fine and gross motor skills and have used mark making activities, wind-up toys, small and large balls and the climbing frame to help with this. We have created some wonderful display boards including our Autumn one, 5 cheeky monkeys and the children's particular favourite "The Kitchen Disco" where the children had great fun making a silver glittery papier-mâché disco ball. We have encouraged the children to look at their faces and the differences they all have and they painted their faces to go on the "This is me" board. We have also looked at our families photos and talked about our interests.



Owls—The children have enjoyed learning our Golden rules and have come up with ideas of their own to add to the list. We have been looking at colours and the children have enjoyed learning the "What's inside the colour bag?" song with the help of our class friend Henry Hedgehog and we have looked at shapes and gone on shape walks around the nursery. The children have looked at the changes to the season and went on a woodland walk to notice the differences that Autumn brings including looking at the leaf colours and how they fall to the floor. We collected leaves to add to our Autumn board and made leaves using a variety of media including wool, paint and paper. We also talked about the animals that will be hibernating soon and what they needed to do to prepare for this. The children have shown an interest in counting and measuring so we have extended this by providing equipment such as tape measures and rulers to allow the children to do this and a conker abacus to count on. This past week has been "spooky week" with the children looking at the pumpkins and making potions with the seeds. We have had Halloween parties where all the children have dressed up in their spooky costumes, played spooky musical statues, bobbed for apples, looked for spooky objects in jelly and went trick or treating.





City—There have been lots of smiles and lots of laughter heard as we return to a new term. The baby unit have been talking lots about Autumn with exciting activities to extend the learning. Mixing Autumn colours with their hands in paint was a firm favourite and these print were then used to create an Autumn display. Space week was celebrated by with making rockets, spaceships and singing space songs such as '5 little men in a flying saucer'. The weather has been on our side this term so lots of outside fun has been had. We have found snail trails and investigated other insects in the outdoor play areas. The children have also extended their physical development on the slides, seesaw's, tunnels and climbing frames, keeping us all healthy and strong. The Pre-school children have also been exploring and learning about Autumn. We have been looking at colours of the leaves changing and talking about the weather turning colder. We have produced some great pictures using leave rubbings, describing how the leaves feel. Conkers have been used to create numbers games and helping us to solve mathematical problems such as more and less. We have had lots of music and dance with 'Music Jo' and have learnt some great Autumn songs as well as creating displays from the story 'Squirrels Autumn'.



St Peters—This half term, we have welcomed many new children to the setting and the children have enjoyed making new friendships. We started out the term by looking at the topic 'All about me, my family and where we live'. The children were able to learn about what makes them unique and learnt the differences between them and their friends. The Children have loved learning all about the local history, especially Stonehenge and Salisbury cathedral. Our biggest interest this term has been the new and improved 'Wild area'. The children have been able to attend Forest based sessions where they have taken part in climbing and jumping off large tree trunks. They have used bug and leaf identification booklets to further their own learning and referring to them to see what they have found. They have also used nature colour wheels to see what colours they can find in their surroundings. They are currently enjoying Autumn as a learning topic and have lots of fun exploring the wild area for sticks and leaves to add to our autumn tuff trays. We have found the daily exploration of the 'wild area' is creating much more resilient children, who persist



with activities such as climbing, and are becoming much braver in their jumping from a height.



Burcombe—All of the children, both new and old have been quick to settle back into the routine and are pleased to be back in their classroom. The children have developed their knowledge of concepts such as big and small whilst

using the Montessori equipment including the Pink Tower and the Knobless Cylinders. We have extended this philosophy to support the children's independence through the practical life activities and self-help skills by sweeping, sorting, transferring, selecting the right tools and clothing and taking care of our environment and each other. The children have used their new-found skills helping to clear the garden of the autumn leaves as well as planting new winter plants and flowers.



Semley—The children at Semley have been busy exploring all things 'Autumn' over the past 2 weeks. We have been researching hedgehogs, making hedgehog homes and looking at what food they eat. We have been looking at the weather, ice, trees, leaves, chestnuts, conkers and pumpkins. The children enjoyed making tea and coffee in the mud kitchen, making sure that they had plenty of sugar to make it taste "Yummy"!





Great Cheverell—The children enjoyed the glorious late summer weather by making the most of our beautiful outdoor space. We have developed our new learning huts - one into a workshop with lots of tyres, wood, tubing and bricks. An ice cream parlour selling cakes, lollies and ice cream and often a nice cup of tea! The last hut is a quiet space where



children can sit quietly and read a range of books either by themselves or with a friend. Developing the children's imaginative play is further enhanced by the large train with two carriages where a group of children can play together. This has had lots of trips to the seaside with ice-creams from the parlour being made for the journey. The courtyard continues to be a popular play space and develops as the children's interests change. As a leaving present, parents brought the children a maths table and animal seats. Natural resources have been added and the children have enjoyed developing their maths skills by counting, sorting and matching. The bug hotel has also welcomed lots of new guests and the children have been fascinated by insects that have booked in.



Calne—South Hills Nursery Calne we have all been busy exploring our environments and learning more about our natural world. In the Explorer and Discover rooms, the children have been developing their curiosity about bugs and minibeasts and how we can use tools to effect changes to materials. The children have enjoyed being outside this term, being creative in the music area, developing their small world play and exploring in the mud kitchen. In the Adventure Room the children have been interested in stories and storytelling.



They have been learning about the 'Super worm' story and have made their own super worms and wormery. The children have particularly enjoyed our story telling stones and spoons to support their learning and understanding.



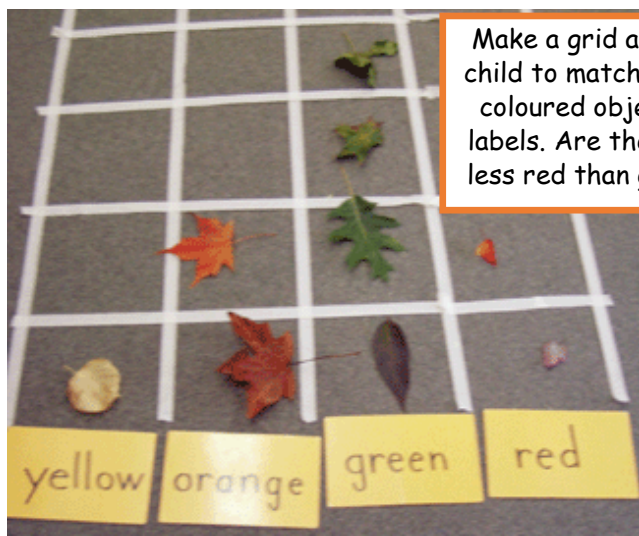
Froxfield—This half term Stepping Stones have been working towards the bronze eco school award. Some of the Upper Nursery children have formed a committee and we are trying to remember to turn the lights off when we leave the room and recycle anything we can! We are making a compost heap and Babies and Toddlers have been collecting sticks for it. Lower nursery have been putting their peelings and left over fruit from snack time in it. Upper Nursery have made a bug hotel and made reusable bags to use when they go shopping.



Corsham—This term has seen the return of both new and familiar faces, some of which we have not seen since March. We have celebrated festivals, engaged in many activities, all of which have offered a range of materials to stimulate all senses, delivered with the potential of involving individual and group participation as we strived to ensure that children had the opportunity to get to know themselves, each other, the practitioners and the setting.

It has been a productive term and we are proud of how well the children have settled.





Make a grid and ask your child to match the natural coloured objects to the labels. Are there more or less red than green ones?



Using an old frame or a box, encourage your child to create a natural picture from items collected on a walk.



Hedgehog leaf picture

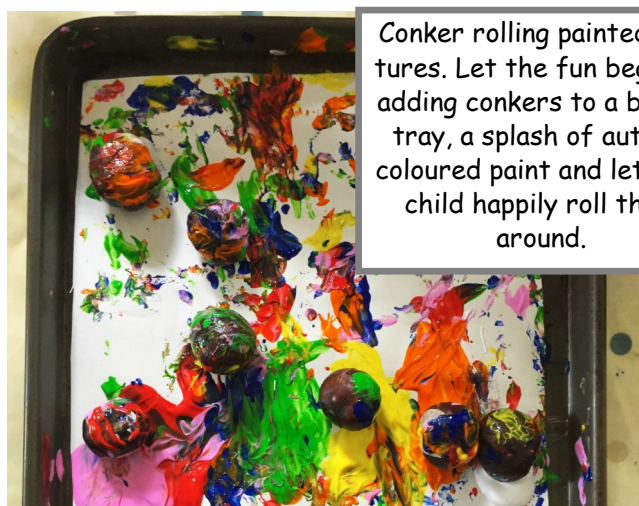


Dip a cotton bud into autumn colours to make a tree.



Rolling conkers or acorns down a ramp made from cardboard in your recycling. Do they go fast or slow?

Write numbers on leaves and encourage your child to use wooden pegs to match the numeral or just peg on and see how many they can fit on 1 leaf.



Conker rolling painted pictures. Let the fun begin by adding conkers to a baking tray, a splash of autumn coloured paint and let your child happily roll them around.



Make a bug house for real or imaginary bugs from items found in your garden or in the local park.

Get cooking with these yummy Autumn and Halloween bakes



AUTUMN KRISPIE LEAVES

Ingredients

3 tablespoons margarine or butter

1 (10 ounce) package regular marshmallows

6 cups Rice Krispies cereal

Yellow or orange frosting

Decorating gel

Directions

In a microwave-safe bowl, heat margarine and marshmallows on high for 3 minutes, stirring after 2 minutes. Stir until smooth. Add Rice Krispies cereal. Stir until well coated. Using buttered spatula or waxed paper, press mixture evenly into 13 x 9 x 2-inch baking pan coated with cooking spray. When slightly cooled, cut cereal mixture with leaf-shaped cookie cutters or use a knife to cut leaf shapes. Allow to cool in the fridge for 1 hour before eating

HEDGEHOG BREAD ROLLS

Ingredients

500g pack brown bread mix

25g butter

plain flour , for dusting

12 raisins

6 flaked almonds

Directions

Make the bread mixture with the butter following pack instructions. It's easiest to use a stand mixer but not difficult to do by hand. Leave the dough to rest for 5 mins, then knead for 5 mins. Cut the dough into six pieces. Dust the surface with a little flour and shape each piece into a ball by rolling it between your hand. Now make it hedgehog-shaped by pulling one side out a little and squeezing it gently into a snout. Be quite firm or it will bounce back. Put the hedgehogs on a baking sheet, cover with a damp tea towel and leave to rise for 1 hr. Heat oven to 200C/180C fan/gas 6. Using kitchen scissors (supervise younger children), carefully snip into the dough to make the spikes on the backs of the hedgehogs. Press raisins in for the eyes and push a flaked almond into the end of each snout. Bake for 15 mins or until the rolls are risen and golden.



SPOOKY MUMMY SAUSAGES

Ingredients: oil for greasing. 1 tbsp honey. 1 tbsp ketchup. 2 tsp French's yellow mustard . plus a little extra to decorate



12 chipolatas, tube of 6 ready-to-roll croissant

Directions

Heat oven to 200C/180C fan/gas 6 and brush 2 baking trays with a little oil. Mix the honey, ketchup and mustard together in a bowl, then brush over the chipolata sausages. Unroll the croissant dough and divide into 3 rectangles. Pinch together the diagonal perforated seams, then cut into long thin strips – you should get about 16 per rectangle. Wind the little croissant strips around the chipolatas, leaving a little gap at one end to make a slit for the eyes. Place on baking trays and bake for 20 mins. Cool a little, then, using the mustard, dot a pair of little yellow eyes on to each mummy.

SWEET POTATO SOUP (to enjoy with your hedgehog rolls?)

Ingredients

Sweet potatoes

Plain rice milk

Cinnamon Powder

Nutmeg Powder

Salt and pepper to taste – optional

Chopped spinach

Chopped parsley for garnish – optional



Directions

Bake the sweet potatoes. Leave them aside to cool. Peel the potatoes and mash it well in a bowl.

Take a large pan and add all the ingredients in it. Keep it on medium heat and let the mix boil.

You can add more rice milk if you feel the soup is turning thick.

Turn off the heat and let it cool for about a couple of hours. Add some garnish if you want.

HALLOWEEN SPIDER BISCUITS

Ingredients

70g butter, softened

50g peanut butter

150g golden caster sugar

1 medium egg

1 tsp vanilla extract

180g plain flour

½ tsp bicarbonate of soda

20 peanut butter cups, Rolos or Maltesers

100g milk chocolate, chopped

icing eyes, or make your own

Directions

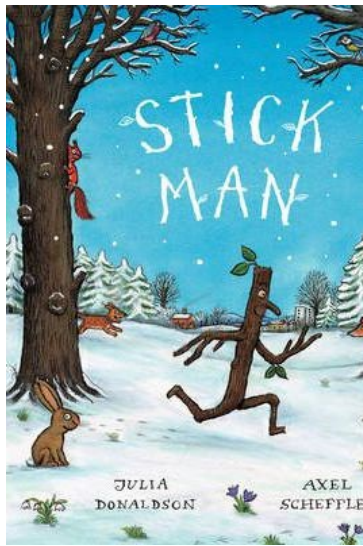
Heat oven to 180C/160C fan/gas 4 and line two baking sheets with parchment. Using an electric hand whisk, cream the butter, peanut butter and sugar together until very light and fluffy, then beat in the egg and vanilla. Once combined, stir in the flour, bicarb and ¼ tsp salt.

Scoop 18-20 tbsps of the mixture onto the trays, leaving enough space between each to allow for spreading. Make a thumbprint in the centre of the cookies. Bake for 10-12 mins or until firm at the edges but still soft in the middle – they'll harden a little as they cool. Leave to cool on the tray for a few mins before topping each biscuit with a peanut butter cup, Rolo or Malteser. Transfer to a wire rack to cool completely.

Heat the chocolate in the microwave in short bursts, or in a bowl set over a pan of simmering water, until just liquid. Scrape into a piping bag and leave to cool a little. Pipe the legs onto each spider, then stick two eyes on each. Leave to set. Will keep for three days in an airtight container.



If you do make any of these recipes with your child, please do send a photograph to their [eglog/Tapestry](#) account. Their key worker would love to see what fun you have had.



I am sure that everyone has heard of the story 'Stickman' by Julia Donaldson so why not make the most of the autumn dropping lots of twigs, sticks and branches from the trees and have a go at some of these activities. You can also watch the film of 'Stickman' by following this link;
<https://www.bbc.co.uk/iplayer/episode/b06t09rk/stick-man>

Make a stick man by laying out twig arms, legs and a body on the ground. Search for leaves and grass to make the hair, and find seeds and flower petals for eyes, nose and ears. Why not make a whole family of stick people that look like your family?



Bird nest

Challenge your child to build a nest strong enough to hold a clutch of eggs and withstand the wind. Slender, bendy twigs are best. You'll need to weave them together to make a basic nest shape, then use dried grass and fallen leaves to fill in any gaps. When you've finished, test it out by putting some small stones or pinecones inside. Can your nest take the weight without falling apart?



To make a journey stick, you will need a few basic supplies. Younger children can use a piece of cardboard with double sided tape attached to secure the items to the card. Older children can make a journey stick the traditional way by choosing a stick and attaching items to it using string or wool. Off out into the community you go and encourage your child to pick up natural objects and stick them to their journey stick. Here are a few ideas for questions you could explore with your child whilst making your journey sticks;

Do you want your journey stick to have a theme? For example, a colour, all flowers, all leaves.

How long does your stick need to be? Think about how long your walk is!

What senses does each item stimulate?

What is the story of your journey stick?

Drumsticks = Find a sturdy pair of sticks and a tree stump and you've got your own woodland drum. Tap out a beat – can you hear the noise change as you drum on different parts of the stump? Experiment on hollow trunks, fallen logs, rocks and railings to create different sounds.



Poohsticks—Winnie the Pooh's favourite game. Each player finds a stick then stands on a bridge over a stream or river. Everyone must drop their sticks into the water at the same time. (Make sure the water is flowing towards you). Now race to the other side of the bridge to see whose stick floats out first.





WELCOME TO SOUTH HILLS NURSERY SCHOOLS

Our website is currently being re-developed. We are hoping that this will be live to share with you all before Christmas. This will contain information about each of our settings, along with beautiful photographs taken by Mark Bastick and videos from our extra curricular teachers for music, fitness fun and French.



If you have any comments to share about this magazine, please email hilarycampbellsmith@southhillsschool.com

'Children see magic because they look for it'

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