

# Knockbreda Nursery School

## April 2020 Newsletter



Dear Parents and Carers

We hope that all of our Knockbreda Nursery children and families are keeping safe and well.

Knockbreda Nursery School will work to continue to help support our parents and carers throughout this difficult time and this unexpected stay at home. Throughout this uncertain period, our little ones need us to hold them close and shower them with love. They will be watching us closely to guide them by our example, by role-modelling our actions and reactions.

More than ever, our children need the freedom to play, to help them make sense of what is happening around them. They need to regain some control of their world, through their play; so let them control the pace and the storyline as you play with them.

As parents, we can't over-love our children during this strange and unsettling time and we must do our best to meet their needs through their play experiences. Now is the time to put down our phones and play cafes in the kitchen, to draw with chalk on the pavement/flagstones and to build a fortress using bed sheets. This is the time to connect through the power of play; for it is play that is the language of the child. It is through powerful play experiences that our children will get through this strange and scary time in their lives and perhaps even recall and remember it with positivity. After all, 'play is the work of children' (Piaget) and 'we don't stop playing because we grow old; we grow old because we stop playing' (Shaw).

I am thinking of you all at this time.  
Take care and stay safe.

Dr Mitchell-Barrett  
Principal

## **Pre-School Curriculum Guidance**

To further support your child's learning at home, we are going to try to continue to send our monthly Newsletter to include themes, topics and some ideas for songs and activities to do at home until we see all of you again.

We continue to update our morning Welcome Time videos onto our website and hope that you are finding these interesting and useful; please visit: (<https://www.knockbredanursery.co.uk/morning-welcome-time>) These videos also include a daily challenge for your child and the sessions complement the tasks in the activity folder previously sent home with your child.

## **Themes and topics**

This half-term, we had planned to conclude our 'Wake Up Spring' topic and to begin a new topic 'All Creatures Great and Small' to learn about minibeasts. In our Welcome Time videos, we have included some suggestions and possible resources to allow the children to enjoy learning about life cycles and investigating mini beasts at home. We have also included some of the songs and rhymes for this topic in this newsletter, so that you can share them with your child at home. Also included are some ideas for activities you can do at home; both indoors and outdoors with no need for the internet or screens. Hopefully these will supplement your home learning packs and you can have fun doing these together.

## **Book Aid**

Thank you for all your support last month with our charity fundraising for Book Aid and special thanks to those parents and carers who shared their favourite stories with us on World Book Day. We loved seeing all the wonderful, creative costumes and hearing about everyone's favourite books. As part of our Rights Respecting School work, the children also suggested some of their favourite books and fairy-tales to share with children in other parts of the world, through the Book Aid charity. Knockbreda Nursery School raised £53.30 for Book Aid; thank you!

## **Eco Fundraising Update**

Due to the current circumstances, this initiative has been put on hold, however we sincerely hope that the children will be able to return to school and enjoy another opportunity to play in and experience all our current outdoor provision. Sincere and heartfelt thanks for all the generous contributions received before our term finished so abruptly.

## **Rights Respecting Schools Update**

Knockbreda Nursery School is delighted to have achieved the Silver Rights Respecting School Award. Thank you to our pupils, parents, staff and Governors for their support. Knockbreda Nursery School is currently the only Nursery School in Northern Ireland holding the Silver Award.

## **Social Distancing**

We know that it is difficult to explain all the new rules and behaviours to our children in a straightforward way that helps them to understand but does not make them feel more anxious. Here is a link to a short online animated story that may help:

[https://youtu.be/DA\\_SsZFYw0w](https://youtu.be/DA_SsZFYw0w)

In addition, Playmobil have also created an animation which also explains social distancing in a child friendly manner, suitable for the early years:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5DIOGKpMNs4>

## **Help Available**

Parentline NI have asked us to let you know that their Regional Parents Helpline is in full operation throughout this period and can be contacted on freephone 0808 8020 400 to provide advice, support and guidance to parents and carers.

They are opened:  
Monday- Thursday 9am-9pm  
Friday 9am-5pm  
Saturday 9am-1pm

They can also be contacted via webchat [www.ci-ni.org.uk](http://www.ci-ni.org.uk) or email [parentline@ci-ni.org.uk](mailto:parentline@ci-ni.org.uk)

# All creatures great and small



## Incy Wincy Spider

Incy Wincy spider, climbed up the water spout,  
Down came the rain  
and washed the spider out.  
Out came the sunshine,  
And dried up all the rain.  
Incy Wincy spider,  
climbed up the spout again.



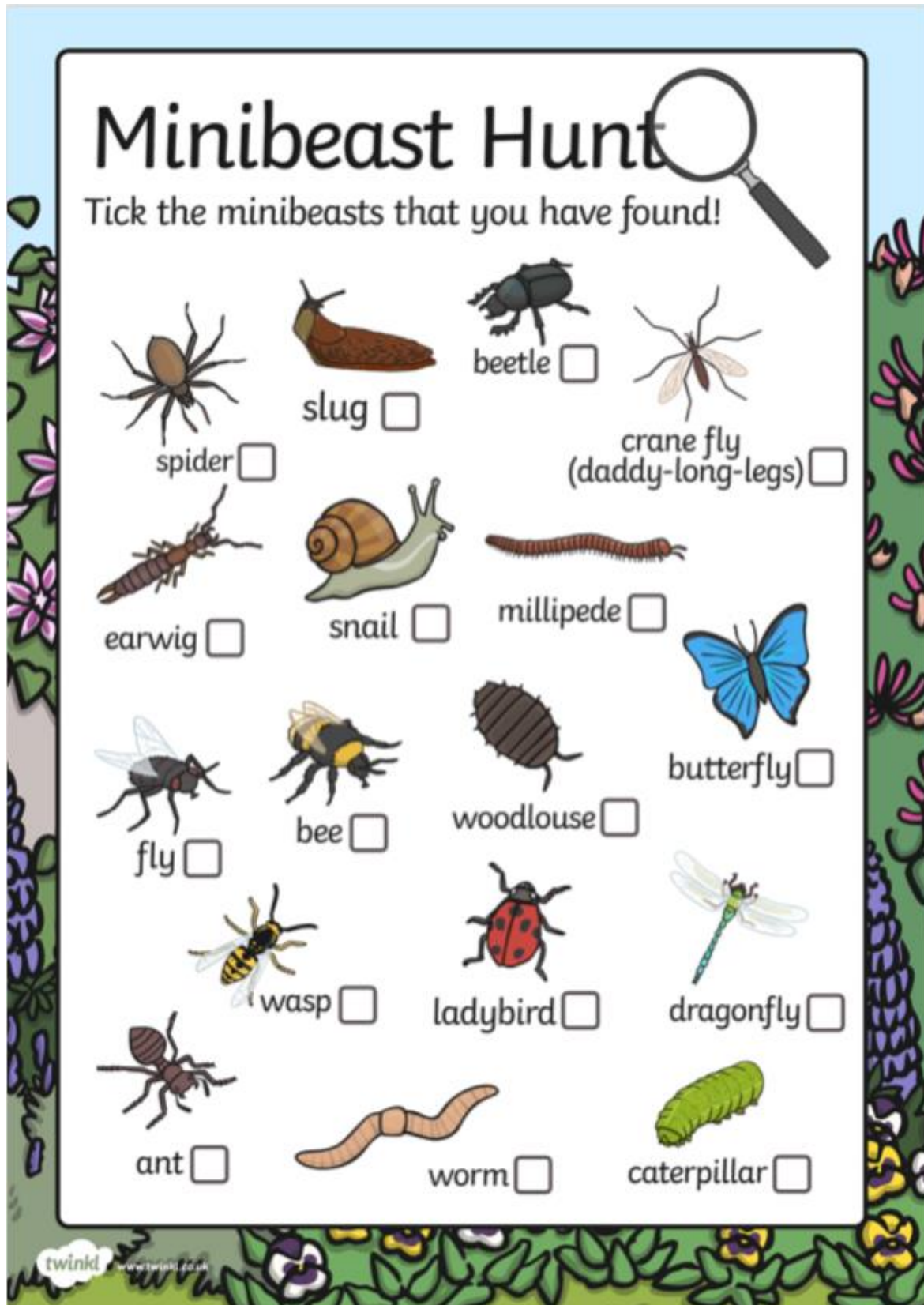
## Ladybird, Ladybird

Ladybird, ladybird,  
Fly away home.  
Your house is on fire,  
And your children all gone.  
All except one,  
And that's Ann,  
For she has crept under,  
The frying pan.



## Minibeast Hunt

Here is a treasure hunt that you can use to identify some of the minibeasts in your garden! This will complement our Morning Welcome Time sessions.



A worksheet titled "Minibeast Hunt" with a magnifying glass icon. The text says "Tick the minibeasts that you have found!". It features 18 illustrations of minibeasts, each with a label and a checkbox. The minibeasts are: spider, slug, beetle, crane fly (daddy-long-legs), earwig, snail, millipede, butterfly, fly, bee, woodlouse, wasp, ladybird, dragonfly, ant, worm, and caterpillar. The worksheet is framed by a decorative border of red tomatoes and green foliage.

**Minibeast Hunt**

Tick the minibeasts that you have found!

spider

slug

beetle

crane fly (daddy-long-legs)

earwig

snail

millipede

butterfly

fly

bee

woodlouse

wasp

ladybird

dragonfly

ant

worm

caterpillar

twinkl [www.twinkl.co.uk](https://www.twinkl.co.uk)

## Activity Ideas

### **Water pictures - Now you see it, now you don't!**



Just get a jar or tub of water, dip in your brush and get going!

You can paint with water on anything that will go darker when it's wet - slabs, bricks, fences. And you can really use whichever tools suit you best. If you want a picture with more detail, try using finer brushes. Or if you want to make more of an impact, really wide paint brushes or rollers work brilliantly.

Or why not take out a washing-up bowl of water and make a picture using hand- or even footprints?

If you want your picture to last longer, paint in a shadier area. Or if you want to challenge yourself to create a picture in record time, paint in a sunny spot and see if you can complete the work of art before it's evaporated into nothing.

### Egg cup microgarden

Enjoy watching cress grow!



You will need:

Clean empty eggshells - majority intact

Cotton wool

Some cress seeds (Or beetroot, chard, rocket, fennel, spinach, mustard)

Place wet cotton wool inside an eggshell and sprinkle with a few cress seeds. Place in an eggcup on the windowsill and wait for seeds to germinate (a root first, closely followed by a shoot). As soon as the shoot produces its first leaves you are ready to harvest (usually one - three weeks after sowing seeds). Snip off the leaves using a clean pair of scissors and taste.

Make sandwiches or a salad, add your cress and enjoy!



## **My World**

Enjoy creating a new world together with your child.

You will need:

Some leftover wallpaper

Any pens, pencils or crayons

If you've got them small cars, people, animals

With your child, create "my world" on the reverse of the wallpaper. It can be a simple, magical, real or invented as they want it to be. You can use empty cartons and boxes for buildings, pebbles and twigs from the garden, small cars, people or animals from the toybox or everything can be drawn on.

## **Go on a Bear Hunt (indoors or outdoors)**

Ask your child to choose 3 of their favourite soft toys and then hide them around the house or the garden while your child shuts their eyes or stays in their room.

When you are ready, you can ask your child to start searching. (make sure you remember the hiding places!).

You can also pop a bear in the front window of your house and encourage your neighbours to do the same. Then head out on a walk around your neighbourhood, on a real 'bear hunt!'





## **Make pinwheel sandwiches**

Encourage your child to make lunch!

You will need:

Soft sliced Bread

Plastic Knife

Butter / spread

Filling

(Suggestions include thin ham, tuna, mayonnaise & sweetcorn, soft cheese, jam)

Clingfilm

Plate

1. Cut the crusts off the bread (you may wish to help your child with this)
2. Add thin layer of butter or spread
3. Thinly spread your chosen filling over the butter/spread
4. Roll up your sandwich starting at one end and keeping the roll as tight as possible.
5. Wrap in clingfilm and put in the fridge to chill for an hour
6. Take out of fridge, unwrap and slice into 5 pinwheels
7. Serve on a plate, whirl-up
8. Eat and enjoy!

## **Wash Day**

Your child will enjoy washing the clothes and hanging them out to dry!

You will need:

Tea towels or old clothes

A drying rack or clothes horse

Pegs

A bowl of warm water

Encourage your child to wash the clothes, wring them out and then hang them out to dry using the clothes pegs. To extend the learning, add a doll who needs washing and some doll's clothes or make a 'car wash' by adding toy cars. Now add socks, can your child find the matching pair?



## Writing Development in the Early Years

Whilst it is tempting at this time of prolonged stay indoors, to make our early years children sit at tables and complete 'work', this is not how our youngest children learn best.....where possible, let's try to still meet their developmental needs in an age appropriate way.

# Ready to write...

We live in a culture that measures the success of a child by their ability to read, write and understand numbers. However, allowing children to play, explore and discover in early years means that they WILL be ready to learn.

## CORE MUSCLES



Before a child can even begin to think about holding a pencil correctly and writing, they need to be given lots of opportunities to strengthen their muscles. First, they need to concentrate on developing their core strength so that they will be able to sit comfortably at a desk; climbing, balancing, jumping and generally just exploring outside.

## GROSS MUSCLES



Next you need to develop their gross motor muscles. Children benefit from engaging in activities that require them to use large arm movements such as vertical mark making; rollers, paintbrushes, chalk. Giving children time to develop their hand to eye coordination through ball games, target throwing and hammering.

## FINE MUSCLES



Once children have strengthened their gross motor muscles, they can concentrate on developing their fine motor muscles so that they will be ready to begin writing. This can be done using tweezers to pick up small objects, cutting with scissors, using their pincer grip to pick up and placing objects.

## HAVE FUN MARK MAKING



Finally have fun making marks in different ways. Children love messy play and instinctively make marks and patterns. Thinking outside the box to encourage mark making; under the table, in sand, using brooms on the ground. The possibilities are endless.

Once children are ready to write they need to be provided with opportunities that will spark their imagination and allow children to become story tellers. Children need to be given the chance to experience different things and most importantly read to regularly.

