Grass Roots Newsletter

Hello October!

Welcome to our October newsletter! As the weather cools down and autumn sets in, we enter what early years settings affectionately call "poorly children season." While seasonal bugs, sniffles, and coughs are a normal part of building a strong childhood immune system, we want to ensure our nursery remains as healthy, safe, and disruption-free as possible for all our children and staff.

This month, we are focusing on Health, Infection Control, and Wellbeing. We've outlined key NHS exclusion guidance, autumn immunisation updates, and simple ways we can work together to keep illnesses at bay.

Monthly Theme: Healthy Bodies, Autumn Weather & Outdoor Play

Throughout October, the children will be exploring how we take care of our bodies and stay well during autumn.

The Great Outdoors: Does Cold Weather Cause Colds?
As the temperature drops, parents often ask us to keep children inside if they have a cough or the sniffles to stop them getting "more poorly." We wanted to share a gentle reminder about how bugs actually work!

- Colds are caused by viruses, not cold air: Children catch colds from airborne viruses and close contact with germs, not from low temperatures or fresh air.
- Outdoor play is actually healthier! Staying indoors in warm, heated rooms with closed windows allows germs to circulate much more easily. Going outside gives children fresh air, reduces germ exposure, and provides vital physical exercise that strengthens their immune systems.
- Keeping cozy: As long as children are dressed in warm layers, waterproofs, hats, and wellies, being outdoors is wonderful for their recovery, wellbeing, and physical development. Unless a child has a high fever or is too unwell to take part in normal activities, outdoor play remains an essential part of our daily routine for every room.

Practitioner Spotlight:



The lovely Amy B and Alicia have both graduated this week! Huge congratulations to them both for working extremely hard over the past couple of years. 🥳⭐

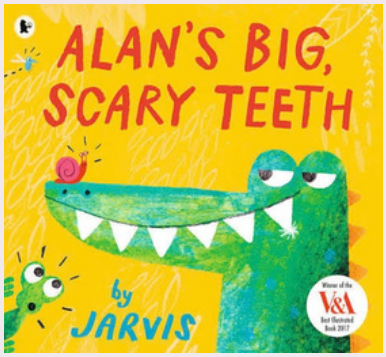
We also want to acknowledge Callie and Georgia for passing their Level 3 qualifications! Well done to you both. We already knew how amazing you all were long before the certificates arrived! 🌟

Event Calendar:

- Half Term Break - nursery closes for term time only children Friday 23rd October and reopens Monday 2nd November.
- Family Stay and Play Friday 30th October 9.30am - 11.30am.

Community News:

- Check out Grass Roots Family CIC facebook page for community events https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100086769567112
- 50 things to do before you are 5 has events on their website https://calderdale.50thingstodo.org/app/os#!/welcome
- Calderdale Family Hubs https://calderdalefamilyhubs.org.uk/



Book Review:



Alan's Big, Scary Teeth by Jarvis

For October, we are reading the hilarious Alan's Big, Scary Teeth by Jarvis. Alan the alligator loves scaring the other jungle animals with his big, sharp teeth—until one day, his secret is exposed: his teeth are actually false, and someone snaps them up!

- Why we love it: It turns the topic of teeth and mouth care into a moment of shared laughter, making dental hygiene far less intimidating for young children.
- Early Language Link: The book is packed with fun mouth sounds (like Snap! Snap! and Gnash! Gnash!) which are brilliant for practicing oral-motor movements and sound making.

✏️ Curriculum Focus: Developing Self-Care, Health Literacy & Communication

Our curriculum this month links directly to Physical Development (Health and Self-Care) and Personal, Social, and Emotional Development (PSED) under the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) framework. Autumn provides a rich, natural opportunity to teach children about their bodies, personal hygiene, and expressing how they feel physically.

Hand Hygiene & Microbe Science (Physical Development) We aren't just telling children to wash their hands, we are teaching them why and how in a tangible, age-appropriate way:

- The Handwashing Routine: Using the NHS Handwashing Song, we teach children to clean between their fingers, under their nails, and around their wrists for at least 20 seconds (the length of "Happy Birthday" sung twice).

Dressing for the Season (Physical & PSED) We actively encourage self-care by teaching children the "coat flip" trick and practicing zips and wellies. These routines build finger strength and give children a huge sense of independence.



❓ Q&A: Handling Common Autumn Health Questions

Q: Why do my child's colds seem to happen so often in autumn?

A: On average, a healthy toddler catches 8 to 12 minor viruses a year. Catching mild bugs is a normal way for young immune systems to build long-lasting antibodies and resilience for school age.

Q2: Why do you enforce a strict 48-hour exclusion policy after sickness or diarrhoea? My child seems fine today!

A: We completely understand that taking time off work for a sick child is stressful and difficult. However, the 48-hour rule is a statutory requirement set by the UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) and Ofsted to protect our entire nursery community.

Gastrointestinal viruses (like Norovirus) are extremely contagious, particularly among toddlers who share toys and explore through touch. A child can continue to shed the virus and pass it on to others for up to 48 hours AFTER their last episode of vomiting or diarrhoea, even if they look bright and energetic.

Strictly observing the full 48-hour window prevents widespread outbreaks that could infect vulnerable babies, pregnant family members, and nursery staff, which would otherwise force us to close entire rooms.

🍽️ Recipe Corner: Autumn Pumpkin & Carrot Soup

A warm, gentle meal packed with Vitamin A and Vitamin C to support young immune systems!

Ingredients:

Chopped pumpkin or butternut squash 400g

Carrots, sliced 2 large

Onion, finely chopped 1

Vegetable stock (low sodium) 1 litre

Olive oil 1 tbsp

Method:

Sauté the onion in oil until soft. Add the pumpkin or squash and carrots, pour in the vegetable stock, and simmer for 20 minutes until tender. Blend until smooth and serve warm with crusty bread!



🛠️ Tips & Tricks: Autumn Wellbeing & Immune Boosters

- Smart Layering: October weather fluctuates constantly! Dress your child in several thin, breathable layers (like a vest, long-sleeve top, and fleece) rather than one thick jumper. This allows practitioners to easily adapt your child's clothing so they stay comfortable both indoors and during energetic outdoor play.
- Prioritise Bedtime Routines: Darker autumn evenings are a natural cue to reset sleep schedules. Young children need between 10 and 12 hours of quality sleep each night to allow their immune systems to recover, repair, and fight off seasonal bugs.
- Immune-Boosting Snacks: Offer foods rich in Vitamin C (citrus fruits, bell peppers, berries) and Zinc (oats, seeds, beans) to support natural immune defences. Offering a piece of fruit alongside a small slice of cheese or nut-free butter helps stabilise energy levels throughout the afternoon.
- Soothing Sore Noses: Frequent wiping can leave delicate skin around little noses red and sore. Apply a thin barrier of child-safe balm or petroleum jelly around their nostrils before they go outside to protect their skin against damp cold air and friction.

Risky Play: Seasonal Ground & Balance

Autumn brings wet leaves, slippery mud, puddles, and uneven ground to our outdoor garden areas. Rather than steering children away from these surfaces, we use environmental changes to teach active risk-awareness and physical resilience:

- Balance & Spatial Awareness: Navigating wet grass, stepping over slick logs, or balancing along damp wooden beams challenges a child's core strength, ankle stability, and spatial judgment.
- Risk Coaching Over Warning: Instead of shouting "Be careful!", our practitioners use guided coaching questions like: "Does that patch of leaves look slippery to you?", "Where can you put your foot so you feel sturdy?", or "Can you lower your center of gravity?" This transforms a physical hazard into a valuable problem-solving opportunity.





Healthy Choices: Immune Boosters, Hydration & Illness Prevention

When seasonal bugs circulate, what we feed our children and how we care for them at home plays a direct role in supporting their recovery and keeping their immune systems resilient.

1. Nutrition for Immune Resilience
   - Fueling White Blood Cells: Offer meals rich in Vitamin C, Zinc, and Vitamin A to help the body fight off respiratory viruses. Leafy greens, citrus fruits, sweet potatoes, and berries are packed with antioxidants that support natural immune defenses.
   - Probiotics & Gut Health: Around 70% of the immune system resides in the gut! Offering plain Greek yogurt, kefir, or fiber-rich oats feeds healthy gut bacteria, which helps regulate the body's inflammatory response during minor illnesses.

2. The Power of Hydration During Illness
   - Flushing Out Toxins: When children have a fever, runny nose, or cough, they lose fluids much faster than usual. Keeping them hydrated thins out mucus, eases sore throats, and helps the body regulate its temperature.

3. Infection Control & Safeguarding at Mealtimes
   - Stopping Cross-Contamination: In the nursery, children never share cups, cutlery, or water bottles. Each child has their own sanitised, clearly labeled bottle to prevent the spread of saliva-borne viruses.

💻 Online Safety: Navigating Health Advice Safely Online

When your little one is feeling unwell, it is completely natural to turn to the internet or social media groups for quick answers and advice. However, online health forums and forums can sometimes spread misinformation or cause unnecessary anxiety. We encourage parents to stick strictly to verified, evidence-based sources like the NHS website or UKHSA guidance when checking symptoms. Additionally, be mindful about sharing your child's specific medical details, symptoms, or photos of them when poorly on public forums or social media groups. Keeping their health information private protects their long-term digital footprint and ensures you receive accurate, safe medical guidance from qualified healthcare professionals.

We strictly follow the official health and exclusion guidance set out by the NHS and the UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) to protect our setting, prevent room closures, and keep vulnerable babies and pregnant mothers safe.

Rather than listing every condition, you can check the interactive NHS guide anytime to see if your child should stay home:

👉 NHS Guide: Is my child too ill for school or nursery?

♻️ Sustainability: Autumn Nature Walks & Reusing Resources

- Seasonal Learning Crafts: We love making the most of nature's free resources! Children collect fallen autumn leaves, pinecones, twigs, and conkers on nature walks to use for counting, sorting, mark-making, and natural art collages.
- Pre-Loved Gear Exchange: Children grow out of outdoor clothing rapidly! Consider swapping outgrown wellies, winter coats, and puddlesuits with other nursery families or donating them to our pre-loved rack to cut down on waste and support each other through the cost of living

Policy Update - Infection Control Policy

Every month we will share one of our updated policies with the newsletter. Please take your time to read this and feedback any comments you may have in relation to this.

You can find all of our policies on the website https://www.grassrootsdaynursery.com/policies-and-procedures

