Grass Roots Newsletter

Hello November!

Welcome to our November newsletter! This month, we are diving into the magical world of songs, stories, and rhymes.

Sharing stories and singing together isn't just a quiet bedtime activity, it is one of the single most powerful ways to build your child's brain, speech, and confidence. Best of all, you don't have to sit down with a thick book to make it happen! From rapping along to picture books to making up silly songs in the car, we want to show you how fun and effortless early literacy can be.

🎶 Monthly Theme: Having Fun with Songs, Stories & Rhymes

Children love repetition, rhythm, and rhyme. When we sing or chant rhymes together, children learn how language is structured, pick up new vocabulary, and develop the listening skills needed for reading later on.

Reading Doesn't Have to Mean Sitting Still!

If your child struggles to sit quietly with a book, or if you don't personally enjoy traditional reading, that is completely fine! Literacy for young children is about connection, sound, and play:

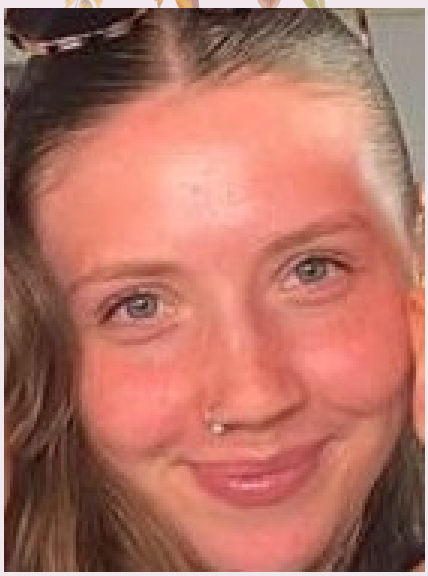
- Audiobooks & Songs: Listening to nursery rhymes, action songs, or audio stories while playing with Play-Doh or Lego still builds brilliant listening and language skills.
- Talking About Pictures: You don't have to read every word on the page. Spotting things in pictures, making silly animal noises, or turning pages quickly counts as storytime!
- Rhymes on the Go: Sing songs while getting dressed, walking to nursery, or washing hands. Rhymes add fun to daily routines and reduce toddler battles.

🎤 Fun Tools for Families: MC Grammar & Interactive Rhymes

To bring stories to life in a way that gets children moving and dancing, we love interactive creators like MC Grammar!

- Rap & Rhyme: MC Grammar turns iconic picture books (like Dear Zoo, The Gruffalo, and Room on the Broom) into energetic rap songs. It's a brilliant way for energetic children, and parents who find traditional reading a bit dry, to fall in love with words and rhythm!
- Give it a try at home: Check out MC Grammar's fun book raps and educational songs on YouTube or streaming apps for instant fun in the living room or car.

Practitioner Spotlight:



Evie will be joining us in the kitchen at St Peter's as the new kitchen assistant. Aggie is retiring at the end of the year at New Road and Julie will be going to replace her.

Evie has previously worked at the cafe at Eureka and has also spent time working at Camp America.

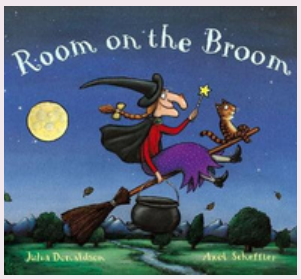
We look forward to Evie starting here at Grass Roots with us!

Event Calendar:

- Parent Meetings W/C 16th November (times and dates TBC)
- Family Stay and Plays W/C 7th December (times and dates TBC)
- Term Time Only Children finish Friday 18th December and Nursery closes 1pm Thursday 24th December.

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:



Room on the Broom by Julia Donaldson & Axel Scheffler

This month, we are diving into the delightful, rhyming world of Room on the Broom. The friendly witch and her cat are flying happily through the sky when the wind blows away her hat, bow, and wand! As she searches for them, she meets a helpful dog, bird, and frog who join her on her broomstick—until it snaps in two!

- Why we love it: It features a wonderfully rich, repetitive rhyming structure ("Is there room on the broom for a frog like me?") that helps children predict the next word and hear sound patterns naturally.
- MC Grammar Tie-In: This is one of MC Grammar's absolute favorite books to turn into a rap! Listening to or rapping along with the rhythm makes the story energetic, memorable, and brilliant for active children who prefer movement over sitting still.

✏️ Curriculum Focus: Communication, Language & WellComm

Our focus on stories and songs links directly to Communication & Language and Physical Development:

1. Rhythm & Early Phonological Awareness (Language)
2. Recognising rhymes (like cat/hat or frog/log) helps children hear the small individual sounds within words, which is a foundational skill for phonics and reading.
3. Action Songs & Coordination (Physical Development)
4. Songs like Head, Shoulders, Knees, and Toes or Wind the Bobbin Up build physical coordination, spatial awareness, and body recognition.
5. WellComm Visual Supports
6. We use puppets, story spoons, and WellComm visual cue cards during group times to help all children follow along, join in, and express themselves confidently.

❓ Q&A: Supporting Literacy at Home



Q: My child won't let me finish reading a book and keeps flipping the pages. What should I do?

A: Let them take the lead! You don't need to read every sentence. Talk about what they point to, make funny voice effects, or let them turn the pages as fast as they like. Five minutes of playful interaction with a book is far better than forcing them to sit through a story.

Q: English isn't my first language. Should I read to my child in English or my home language?

A: Always share stories and rhymes in your home language! Building a rich vocabulary and strong rhythm in your native language makes it much easier for your child to acquire English at nursery.

Discover Your Local Calderdale Library

Did you know that children can join the library from the day they are born? Calderdale Libraries offer fantastic, free resources for early years families, including regular Storytots and Baby Bounce & Rhyme sessions.

👉 Join the Library Online: You can sign up for a free library card online or find your nearest branch by visiting Calderdale Council: Join the Library.

👉 What's On for Under 5s: Check out the full timetable of free storytimes and events across Calderdale at Calderdale Libraries for Children & Young People. https://new.calderdale.gov.uk/libraries/children-and-young-people

🍲 Recipe Corner: Cozy Storytime Hot Chocolate & Apple Slices

A simple, comforting treat to enjoy after an active rhyming session or park walk!

Ingredients

- Milk (or plant-based alternative) 400ml
- Unsweetened cocoa powder 1 tbsp
- Honey or maple syrup (for children over 1 year) 1 tsp
- Red or green apples, sliced into sticks 2

Method:

Warm the milk gently in a pan, whisk in the cocoa powder and honey/syrup until smooth, and pour into small cups. Serve alongside crisp apple slices for dipping or crunching!

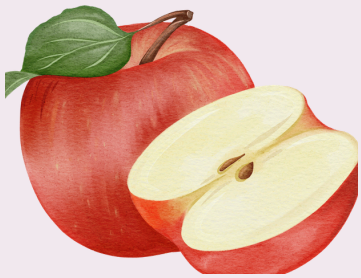
Tips & Tricks: Making Stories Fun Every Day

Embrace Silly Voices:
Don't worry about being a performance actor! Using dramatic pauses, squeaky voices, or loud whisper sounds brings characters alive and keeps attention locked in.

Invent Your Own Rhymes:
Swap words in classic nursery rhymes (e.g., "Twinkle, twinkle, little car..." or "Baa baa green sheep...") to spark your child's humor and test their listening skills.

Keep Books Within Easy Reach:
Place low baskets or fabric bins of books near the sofa, in the car, or alongside floor toys so books are viewed as inviting play objects rather than strictly adult-led tasks.

Sing Through Transitions:
Use simple 10-second transition songs when putting shoes on, washing hands, or tidying up toys to make daily routine shifts smooth and musical.







🎄 Risky Play: Darkness, Shadows & Night-time Stories

As the November afternoons draw in early, the fading daylight gives us a fantastic opportunity to explore light, shadow, and night-time play in a safe, controlled way:

- Navigating Low Light: Playing outdoors at twilight or exploring dimly lit story nooks challenges a child's spatial awareness, depth perception, and sensory processing. Learning to move confidently when visibility changes helps children build physical independence and manage early fears of the dark.
- Torchlight Story Walks & Shadows: Using torches to shine light on trees, make shadow puppets, or track "glow-in-the-dark" story clues outdoors turns low light into an exciting adventure rather than something scary.
- Supportive Risk Coaching: Instead of saying "Watch out, it's getting dark!", practitioners encourage self-assessment with prompts like: "Where can you shine your torch to see the path clearly?" or "How does the ground feel under your feet now?" This helps children develop an internal "safety radar" while enjoying atmospheric winter play.



🥗 Healthy Choices: Bedtime Stories & Dental Hygiene

Combining health routines with songs and stories makes everyday self-care effortless for parents while building healthy, lifelong habits for young children.

1. Bedtime Stories over Screen Time
   - Supporting Sleep: Swapping tablets, phones, or TVs for a soothing bedtime story, audiobook, or gentle lullaby 30 to 60 minutes before bed significantly improves sleep quality. Screen light halts the production of melatonin (the sleep hormone), whereas the rhythmic cadence of a parent's voice lowers heart rates, reduces cortisol, and signals to the brain that it is time for deep, restorative rest

   - Overnight Cognitive Processing: Research shows that the words and concepts children hear right before falling asleep are consolidated during REM sleep, boosting memory retention and language processing overnight.

2. Oral Health & Toothbrushing Songs
   - Making 2 Minutes Fly By: Children should brush their teeth for two full minutes twice a day, but keeping a toddler focused for that long can feel like a battle! Using interactive songs, 2-minute timers, or brushing rhymes (like "Brush your teeth up high, brush your teeth down low...") transforms a daily chore into a playful routine.

👉 NHS Better Health: Hey Duggee Toothbrushing Song & Video

💻 Online Safety: Safe Listening, Streaming & Screen Balance

As winter approaches and families spend more time indoors, digital devices often become a bigger part of daily entertainment. Staying mindful of how we use screens helps protect young eyes, supports healthy brain development, and ensures digital safety.

Curated Content & Age-Appropriate Streaming

- When using video platforms or audio streaming apps for children's raps, nursery rhymes, and story tracks (like MC Grammar or YouTube Kids), it's easy for auto-play algorithms to jump to unfiltered content.

Locking Down Devices:

- Ensure child-lock settings, strict safety filters, and auto-play disabled features are active on smart TVs, tablets, and phones.

Ad-Free Environments:

- Pop-up ads can be confusing or frightening for under-5s. Where possible, stick to curated, ad-free platforms like BBC iPlayer/CBeebies, BBC Sounds, or dedicated kids' audio apps.

♻️ Sustainability: Library Access & DIY Instruments

- Teaching children to care for books and reuse everyday materials builds early environmental awareness and keeps winter reading accessible for every single family!
- Join the Library: Don't forget that local public libraries are completely free to join! Signing up gives you access to thousands of physical books, audiobooks, and events without needing to buy new.
- Accessibility Support: We want every child to enjoy stories at home. If you have accessibility issues, difficulty getting to a local library, please let us know! We are more than happy to send books home directly from our entrance-way library with your child.

Policy Update - Curriculum, Learning & Development Policy (EYFS)

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

