



Grass Roots Newsletter

Hello October!

This month our theme acknowledges the fact that no parent can do it all alone and encourages families to actively seek and build the resources (emotional, practical, and social) they need to thrive. The core message is: Your child is supported best when you are supported best.

There are lots of events this month happening in the local area, see our local events section for details and attached posters to the post.



Monthly Theme - Strong Foundations: Building Your Parent Support Network

Parenting is the most rewarding job, but it can also be the loneliest and most demanding. This month, our focus is on building a Strong Foundation beneath you—your vital Parent Support Network. Think of it like this: your child needs a stable, secure base to grow, and you are that base. But even the strongest structure needs columns and beams to hold it up! A strong network isn't a luxury; it's a non-negotiable part of your wellbeing. It's the friend you can call for a vent, the neighbor who watches your kids for ten minutes, or the partner who takes over for a much-needed break. It's permission to stop 'doing it all' and start focusing on connection over perfection. Over the next few weeks, we'll explore simple, actionable ways to strengthen these connections, ask for help without guilt, and lighten your load.

For further parenting support:

<https://parentingsmart.place2be.org.uk/article/healthy-habits-for-parenting>

For parents with children with Brain Conditions

<https://cerebra.org.uk/get-advice-support/parent-guides/looking-after-your-own-wellbeing/>

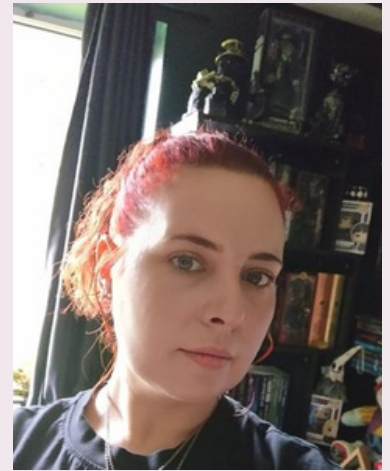




Practitioner Spotlight:

This month, we are thrilled to highlight Christine, our preschool room leader at St Peter's, in our practitioner spotlight. Christine is the recipient of this month's praise award, and the wonderful feedback from the team reflects her exceptional performance in her transition from our under 2's room to preschool.

Having worked at Grass Roots for over six years, Christine has experience with all age groups. Her expertise lies in supporting children's behaviour, and her calm and consistent presence proves to be highly effective.



Event Calendar:

- Family SEND support session @ Grass Roots Family Centre Thursday 16th October at 10am.
- Photographer Days - Tuesday 14th October @ New Road. Wednesday 15th October @ St. Peters
- We break up for October half term on Friday 17th October and return to nursery on Monday 3rd November.

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>
- Support Noa's Place, a vision of one of our nursery's parents - www.noasplace.org.uk

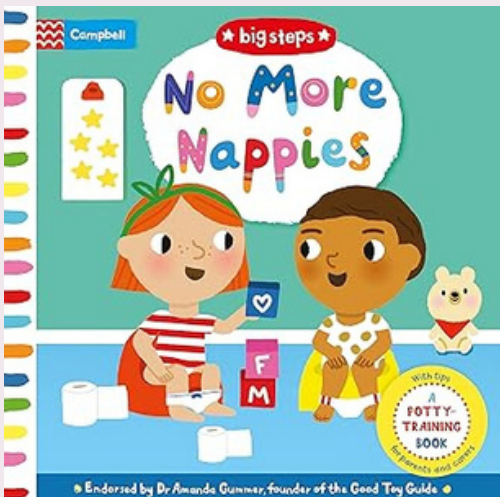


Book Review:

No More Nappies : With helpful tips for potty training - Campbell Books

'I like reading this book to the children, it is really interactive, with flaps and mechanisms that keep them engaged easily. I enjoy it the most when all the children cheer at the end!'

Noah - Preschool Apprentice @ New Road





Curriculum Focus: Wellbeing Through Play

Did you know the activities your child enjoys at nursery actively support your parenting wellbeing? We focus on play that helps create a calmer, less stressful home environment for the whole family.

1. Sensory Play = Peace at Home

Engaging with sand, water, and dough is incredibly calming for children. When a child is regulated through sensory play, it reduces restlessness and challenging behaviours. A settled child means a more peaceful environment for you. Introduce simple sensory activities at home to dial down the stress.

2. Resilience Through Free Play

We encourage children to solve their own small problems during play. This focus on resilience and independence is key to their development. A resilient child is less reliant on you to fix every minor issue, which significantly reduces your daily mental load and helps prevent burnout.

3. The Language of Feelings

We teach children to name their emotions (e.g., "frustrated," "sad"). When children can effectively label what they feel, they are less likely to express it through difficult behaviours. Knowing why your child is upset reduces your emotional guesswork and allows for clearer communication, leading to deeper connection and less stress. Use our feeling words at home!

Q&A: "My child is struggling with drop-offs. How can I feel less guilty when I leave them crying?"

Your guilt is completely normal—it means you have a strong, loving attachment. But please know the tears are a healthy protest, not a sign of lasting unhappiness.

The secret to less guilt is a warm, firm, and fast routine:

1. **Reframe the Tears:** Their crying is because they love you and are sad to say goodbye, not because they dislike nursery. This sadness is temporary.
2. **Be Quick and Consistent:** Create a short, special goodbye ritual (three hugs, one kiss, etc.). Hand them to a trusted staff member and leave without lingering. Stretching it out only prolongs the distress for both of you.
3. **Ask for Reassurance:** Ask your child's key person to send a quick message or photo confirming your child is settled and playing (usually within minutes!). This combats the painful image of them crying all day.

You are being a great parent by giving them a secure base and teaching them that their feelings are safe, even when you have to be apart. That is the strongest foundation you can provide.





Recipe Corner: Snacks to keep you happy

Whether you are looking for something to take to work to keep you fuelled or something to keep for yourself when the children are at nursery/school.

Here are some ideas of homemade snacks

https://www.bbc.co.uk/food/collections/easy_snack_recipes

My favourite and the sweeter treats that you can have with a warm cuppa whilst you have 5-10 minutes to yourself. A quick and easy recipe is this Basic Flapjack from our website:

300g margarine
150g soft brown sugar
6 tsp golden syrup
375g oats
75g plain flour



Preheat oven to 180/gas mk 4

On a low heat, melt margarine, syrup & sugar.
You can use the microwave if you prefer, just do it in stages as not to burn.

Add oats and flour to mix. Mix together until all combined
Press into a shallow tin. Bake for 15-20 mins.

If you like you can add dried fruit, chocolate chips to the mix, for a variation in your flapjack. These are added at the same time as you mix everything together.

Tips and Tricks: Wellbeing Hacks

Boosting your parenting wellbeing often comes down to mastering small, consistent routines that reduce daily friction and stress. This month, try experimenting with these three hacks to create more mental space:

1. **The 2-Minute Tidy Rule:** This is a powerful hack against morning chaos. Before you settle down for the night, spend just two minutes tidying a key area, like the kitchen counter or the living room floor. It's a quick win that prevents clutter from piling up and significantly reduces that stressful, overwhelmed feeling when you wake up to a calmer space.
2. **"Connection Before Correction":** When a challenging behaviour occurs, the natural parent instinct is often to immediately correct or react. Instead, try pausing and focusing on connecting first. Offer a hug, kneel down to make eye contact, or simply acknowledge their feeling ("I see you're frustrated"). This moment of connection recharges your child's emotional battery, making them much more receptive to listening to boundaries and corrections.
3. **The "Batching" Mindset:** Look for ways to group similar, tedious tasks together to conserve your mental energy. Instead of paying one bill here and folding one load of laundry there, try batching them. For example, lay out all clothing and pack all bags for the week on Sunday night, or commit to running all errands on Thursday morning. This reduces decision fatigue and frees up your mind during the busiest parts of the week.





Risky Play: Calming Parental Anxiety

It sounds scary, but encouraging risky play actually reduces your stress long-term! It helps your child develop the safety skills they need so you don't have to constantly supervise or intervene.

1. The Benefits of Bumps

Letting children climb higher or run faster (within safe limits) is vital. It teaches them:

- **Risk Assessment:** They learn to gauge speed and distance, mastering their own body.
- **Self-Regulation:** They learn to manage strong feelings like fear and excitement.

2. The Parent's Role: Coach, Not Catcher

Shift your role from constantly "catching" to "coaching" from a distance. Hovering sends the message that your child is incapable, which increases your burden and mental load. Stepping back shows trust and builds their confidence.

3. Try This at Home

Give your child competent autonomy—let them be in charge of a safe task:

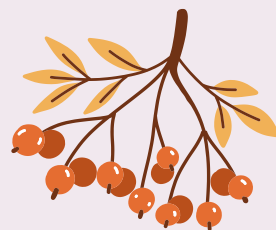
- **Pillow Fort Architect:** Let them fully design and build a fort on their own.
- **Real Tools, Real Work:** Under close supervision, let them use a small, dull knife to cut soft foods like bananas.

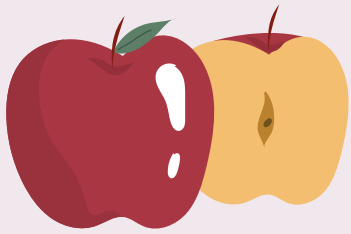
Embrace the courage to step back; the payoff is a more capable child and a less anxious parent!

Healthy Choices: Sleep and Stress Management

When we talk about healthy choices, we often default to focusing on nutrition, but this month, let's address the fundamental building blocks of parental stability: sleep and hydration. Parental stress and short tempers are often symptoms of chronic sleep debt. We urge you to adopt the 7-Hour Imperative—aiming to protect your sleep as if it were a non-negotiable appointment. This might mean setting a clear "digital curfew" to keep phones out of the bedroom, or consciously choosing to leave non-urgent chores for the morning. Remember: getting enough rest is not selfish; it's the most effective strategy for being a patient, present parent the next day.

In addition to sleep, don't underestimate the power of hydration. Dehydration often mimics feelings of anxiety, fatigue, and irritability, making it harder to cope with minor stressors. Make the simple mood-boosting choice to keep a full water bottle with you throughout the day. Prioritizing these basic physical needs is a powerful, proactive step toward managing your own emotional regulation and making your entire parenting experience feel less overwhelming.





Online Safety: Digital Boundaries for Wellbeing



In today's digital world, online safety is about more than just protecting your children from inappropriate content; it's about setting digital boundaries that protect the wellbeing and presence of the whole family. When technology constantly interrupts your attention, it heightens stress and friction at home.

1. The Parent as Digital Role Model

The best online safety measure is to model healthy behaviour. Your children will adopt the habits they see.

- **Implement a "Digital Disconnect" Window:** Set a mandatory, screen-free time at home (e.g., 5:00 PM – 7:00 PM) for everyone, including adults. This is time dedicated to fully present family connection, which significantly reduces the feeling of being fragmented and stressed.
- **The Art of Muting:** Take control of your attention by muting non-essential notifications on your phone. Fewer interruptions mean more mental space and less scattered attention, allowing you to be a more patient parent.

2. Combating Parenting FOMO

The relentless "highlight reel" of other parents' lives on social media is a major source of anxiety and guilt.

- **Avoid the Comparison Trap:** Remind yourself that social media is highly curated. Focus on your own family's rhythm and celebrate your small, real wins. Unfollow any account that makes you feel less-than-adequate.

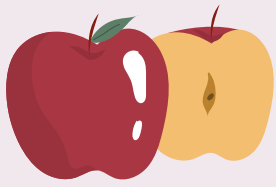
3. Protecting Your Child's Digital Footprint

While your children are young, you are the gatekeeper of their digital life.

- **Be Mindful of "Sharenting":** Think before you post. Be selective about what photos and personal details you share online. Once a photo is posted, you lose control of it forever. This practice protects their future privacy and gives you peace of mind.
- **Check Privacy Settings:** Regularly review the privacy settings on all your social media accounts and devices to ensure that your family's information is only seen by the people you trust.

Setting these boundaries isn't restrictive; it's an act of intentional self-care that strengthens your family's foundation.





Sustainability: The 3 R's of a Calmer Home

Our nursery promotes a Reuse, Repurpose, and Recycle ethos, and this month, we encourage you to adopt the 3 R's not just for the planet, but for your own parental peace of mind. Sustainability is a direct path to less stuff, less spending, and less mental clutter.

1. Reuse → Reduce Stress and Spending

The pressure to constantly buy new toys, clothes, and tools is a major drain on finances and mental energy.

- **The Second-Hand Win:** Embrace borrowing, swapping, or buying second-hand items. This cuts back on consumer stress and teaches your child the value of items, not just the novelty of the packaging.
- **Durable over Disposable:** Invest in sturdy, reusable items (like water bottles and snack containers). While disposable items are convenient in the short term, managing the constant replacement and accumulation of single-use plastic adds to your household chaos.

2. Repurpose → Creative, Screen-Free Play

Repurposing encourages creative thinking and turns potential trash into a treasure trove of learning opportunities.

- **The "Junk Modelling" Challenge:** Keep a dedicated box of clean cardboard, tubes, and containers. This "loose parts" collection encourages your child to invent and build on their own, transforming a passive screen-time session into an active, screen-free creative project.
- **Meaningful Play:** The toys your child makes from repurposing are often more valued than the toys you buy, providing a deeper sense of accomplishment and a quiet focus on the task at hand.

3. Recycle → Creating a Clean System

Recycling, when done systematically, teaches order and responsibility, which translates to a less chaotic home environment.

- **Establish a System:** Make recycling bins visible and clearly labeled. Involve your child in the sorting process. This isn't just a chore; it's a lesson in classification and community responsibility. A clear system removes confusion and reduces the mental energy spent asking, "Does this go in the bin?"

By practicing the 3 R's at home, you're not just being eco-friendly—you're proactively simplifying your family's life, leading to a calmer, more mindful home.

