



Grass Roots Newsletter



Hello August!!

Welcome to our August newsletter! As we reach the final stretch of summer, families are often dealing with a mix of emotions, excitement for the new term, a bit of sadness that summer is winding down, and perhaps a little anxiety about the upcoming changes. Whether your child is preparing to take that big step into primary school or moving up into a new room here at nursery, this month is all about bringing back a sense of calm, steady structure.

As our setting's Physical Activity and Nutrition Co-ordinator (PANCo), my focus this month is on the massive physical, linguistic, and emotional benefits of consistent daily routines. By combining our PANCo approach with Emotion Coaching and our active participation in the Calderdale WellComm Project, we are showing how a predictable daily rhythm supports your child's brain development, communication skills, and sleep patterns.

Monthly Theme: Why Kids Need Routines & Emotion Coaching

For children aged 0-5, the world is huge, loud, and often unpredictable. They don't have a calendar, a watch, or control over their day. Routine is their anchor.

Reducing Anxiety Through Predictability:

When a child knows what happens next ("First we put shoes on, then we brush teeth, then we leave"), their nervous system relaxes. When every single step is a surprise or a battle, their stress levels rise, which often triggers meltdowns or defiance.

Connecting WellComm & Emotion Coaching to Routine:

As part of the WellComm Project, we know that children need clear, consistent language to understand their day. When we pair routine with Emotion Coaching, we help children connect how they feel to what is happening:

1. Notice & Validate: "I see you're struggling to leave your toys. It's hard to stop playing when you're having fun."
2. Set the Routine Boundary: "It's time for lunch now. First wash hands, then sit at the table."
3. Co-regulate: Sitting with them to help them process the transition before moving on.





Summer

Practitioner Spotlight:

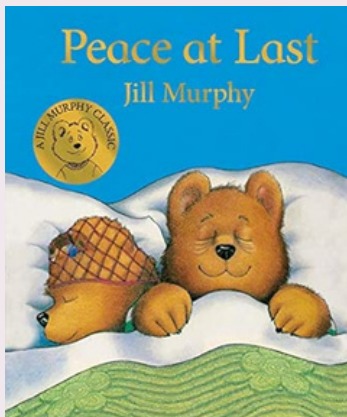
Katarzyna has been a part of our nursery (St Peter's) for a couple of months now. As our nursery housekeeper, she ensures that our environment remains clean and tidy.

She is a wonderful person, always ready to assist the team. Her exceptional cleaning skills are greatly appreciated, and we truly value her contributions!



Event Calendar:

- All term time only children return to nursery the week commencing 7th September.
- We will soon be releasing an annual events calendar!



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:

Peace at Last by Jill Murphy



A timeless family favourite that hits the nail on the head when it comes to bedtime routines and sensory overload!

- Why we love it: Mr. Bear is desperate for sleep, but the house is full of noisy distractions—from the ticking clock to the leaking tap. Children find it hilarious, but it also opens up a great conversation about how our environment affects our rest.
- Communication Link: The story is packed with brilliant, repetitive sound words ("NYAAOW," "TICK TOCK," "SPLISH SPLASH"). Get your child to make the noise of each room as you read along—this is a fantastic WellComm activity for speech sound discrimination!
- Emotional Link: Use the story to name Mr. Bear's feelings: "Look at Mr. Bear, he looks so frustrated because he can't sleep. How does your body feel when you are tired?"





Curriculum Focus: Building Independence at Nursery

In our setting, our day is built around a clear, visual routine. We don't just enforce rules; we use routines to teach children how to take charge of their own personal care and develop their language.

- **Visual Timetables:** In every room, we use visual picture cards aligned with our WellComm communication tools to show the plan for the day. Children can look at the board and see: Snack time → Garden play → Storytime → Lunch. This reduces the processing load on their brain, helps them understand sequences, and makes room transitions feel completely safe.
- **Self-Help Skills in Action:** We build dedicated time into our daily schedule for practical self-help skills. The children learn to find their own pegs, hang up their coats, put on their own high-vis vests for garden play, and scrape their own plates after lunch.
- **The "Clean Up" Rhythm:** Tidy-up time isn't treated as a boring chore; it's a physical transition that signals the end of one activity and the start of the next. It teaches responsibility, categorisation, and spatial awareness.

? Q&A: Fixing the Late August Bedtime Shift

Q: Summer has completely wrecked our bedtime schedule. My 3-year-old is staying up late and waking up cranky. How do I fix this before September without nightly screaming matches?

A: Do not try to fix it all in one night! Shifting a sleep routine cold-turkey never works. Use the 15-Minute Rule. Starting mid-August, move bedtime forward by just 15 minutes every 2-3 days. If they currently fall asleep at 9:00 PM, aim for 8:45 PM for a couple of nights, then 8:30 PM, and so on.

Pair this with an empathetic approach when they resist: "I know you want to stay up and play, it's hard when the sun is still out. But your body needs sleep to grow strong for tomorrow." Also, remember a strict "digital sunset"—turn off all screens at least one hour before bed, as blue light suppresses the sleep hormone melatonin.

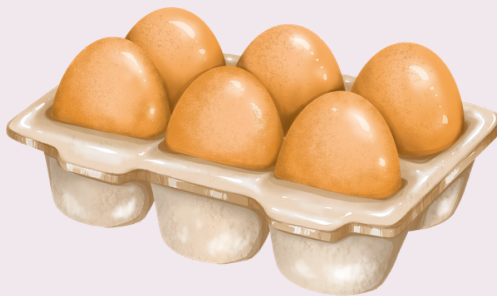




Recipe Corner: "Grab & Go" Breakfast Omelette Cups

Mornings are usually the messiest part of any family routine. These can be made in batches on Sunday night, stored in the fridge, and warmed up in seconds for a high-protein, zero-stress breakfast.

- The Recipe: Whisk 6 eggs with a splash of milk. Chop up whatever your kids like—ham, grated cheese, spinach, or sweetcorn.
- Pour into a greased muffin tray and bake at 180°C for 15 minutes until firm.
- The Routine Hack: Keep these on hand for those rushed mornings when you need to get out the door fast. Pair with a piece of fruit, and breakfast is sorted in under two minutes!

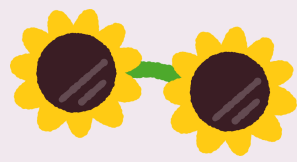


Tips & Tricks: 3 Low-Fuss Home Routines That Work

You don't need a rigid schedule at home—you just need predictable sequences.

- The "Launchpad" Routine: Every evening, put everything needed for the next morning in one exact spot by the door (nursery bag, shoes, coat). Involve your child: "Can you put your water bottle on the launchpad?" This eliminates the 8:00 AM panic search for missing shoes.
- The "First / Then" Language: If your child struggles with multi-step tasks, strip away long explanations and use simple "First / Then" language paired with gestures: "First shoes, then park." or "First teeth, then story."
- The 4-Step Bedtime Sequence: Keep it short, quiet, and identical every night: Bath → Teeth → Story → Bed. Once this pattern is locked in, the body naturally starts winding down as soon as the bath water runs.





Risky Play: Routine vs. Flexibility

While routines are essential, physical confidence comes from learning how to adapt when things don't go to plan.

- **The "Plan B" Game:** Sometimes a playground is closed, or it starts pouring rain. Use these moments to build resilience: "It's frustrating that the park is closed. Let's take a deep breath. What is our physical Plan B?"
- **Adapting Physical Challenges:** When playing outdoors, encourage them to adapt their movements to changing environments—stepping on dry logs vs. slippery wet rocks. This teaches their body and brain how to assess changing physical risks on the spot.



Healthy Choices: Mealtimes as an Anchor

Routine isn't just about sleep—it's about how we fuel our bodies. Chaotic eating schedules lead to blood sugar spikes, low energy, and extreme moods.

- **Set Snack Windows:** Avoid letting children "graze" on snacks all day long. When kids graze, they are never truly hungry for nutritious main meals, and their teeth are under constant acid attack. Set clear "snack windows" (e.g., mid-morning and mid-afternoon) and stick to water between times.
- **The Family Table Routine:** Even if it's just for 10 minutes, try to have at least one meal a day where everyone sits down together without screens. Sitting upright at a table supports core posture, aids digestion, and provides a calm space for rich language modelling ("Pass the peas, please").





Online Safety: Setting Digital Boundaries

Screen time often creeps up during the summer holidays. August is the ideal month to reset your home's digital routine.

- **Predictable Screen Windows:** Instead of saying "yes" or "no" to tablets randomly throughout the day, create a set "screen window" (e.g., 30 minutes while you prepare dinner). When the boundary is clear and predictable, children throw fewer tantrums when it's time to turn it off.
- **Visual Timers:** Young children don't understand "5 more minutes." Use a physical kitchen timer or a visual countdown app so they can see the time running out. When the timer rings, it's the timer telling them to turn it off, not you!



Sustainability: Sustainable Daily Habits

Building a routine isn't just good for your household; it teaches long-term sustainable living.

- **Conserving Resources in the Routine:** Build eco-friendly habits straight into your child's daily personal care routine—turning off the tap while brushing teeth, switching off bedroom lights when leaving the room, and using reusable water bottles instead of single-use plastics.
- **Consistent Habits Last:** The routines you build now around active travel, healthy eating, clear communication, and sensible sleep will follow your child into primary school and beyond. A predictable home life builds a resilient, confident child ready to tackle any big change ahead!

Policy Update - Children's Wellbeing 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>

