

Introducing Woodwork Stations to our Nurseries



Woodwork with Mrs Naylor at Woodlands Day Nursery

The Elmscot Group of Day Nurseries and Nursery Schools are introducing new woodwork areas into their award-winning outdoor learning environments from this Spring. Woodwork is a perfect activity where children from age 3 can learn effectively – investigating and experiencing new things, having a go at something new, developing concentration and overcoming difficulties, developing and linking new ideas, developing strategies for doing things and enjoying their achievements.

The Early Years Foundation Stage, a framework for supporting child development and education for children from birth up to the end of Reception Year, sets out 7 areas of learning all of which are developed during woodwork activities. The 3 Prime areas supported are:

1. Physical development - as muscles become stronger, children vary the force they use and hand-eye coordination is developed. Fine motor control is needed to hold nails in place.
2. Personal, social and emotional development - children demonstrate deep levels of involvement when undertaking woodwork: perhaps because it seems a 'real' task and is truly challenging. They develop problem solving abilities which can carry over into real-life situations. Those who usually find it hard to conform manage to comply with boundaries as they are so keen to take part. Self-esteem is boosted as children feel pride in their hard-won achievements.
3. Communication and language - Children discuss the rules and safety and learn new words.

How do you manage the risks?

Adults may think of woodwork as too risky an activity – and it is risky. But the learning benefits

Continued on Page 2

forthcoming events

World Ocean Day

9 June

Lots of water play in the gardens. For Woodlands only, a trip to the local Aquatics Centre

Father's Day

16 June

Inviting all dads to join us for Afternoon Tea at 4pm

Picnic Week

16-22 June

A Teddy Bear's Picnic trip to the local park, including home-grown cress in the sandwiches

EYFS Parent Workshop

17 June, 6.30-8pm

A free workshop for all parents on child development milestones and the Early Years Foundation Stage

Insect Week

23-29 June

Each Nursery will be visited by Zoolab for children to enjoy a hands on experience with mini-beasts

Preschool Graduation, School

Leavers' Party & Photographs

8 July, Elmscot; 9 July, Woodlands; 10 July (Hale)

For children starting Reception in September: all are invited to attend, even if not your regular session. A commemorative group photo in graduation gowns will be taken. See Nursery for more details

Wimbledon

23-26 July

Strawberries and cream, home-made lemonade and mini-tennis in the gardens

Parents' Evenings

July, Elmscot & Woodlands

More details to follow from each Nursery

Sports Day with Stretch 'n' Grow

28 July, Hale; 29 July, Elmscot; 30 July, Woodlands

Children & parents are invited to celebrate our sporting achievements! See Nursery for more details.

Eid

29 July

For a traditional sweet breakfast, we'll be celebrating with pancakes today

Friendship Day

4 August

Taking photos of friends & creating a Friendship Mural

School Uniform Day

12 August

Reception Starters show off their new uniform.

Elmscot Group Music Festival

21 August

Elmscotbury! A festival scene in the garden. If you can, bring an instrument from home, and parents are invited to come and play an instrument for the children too.

Beach Day

27 August

Making ice cream and hula skirts on a beach in the garden

Woodwork: Continued from Front Page

are great and the risks can be managed. Children actually need risk in play: "Children who are not exposed to risk nor given opportunities to test their boundaries will be incapable of taking risk", says Henrik Neegard, a Norwegian expert and author on outdoor play in the Early Years. "Overprotecting children can produce anxious children who don't know how to deal with their surrounding environment." He goes on to say that educators should take a balanced view on the benefits versus the risk.

In a childcare setting, it is often too easy to say 'no' to risky activities for fear of how parents will react if something goes wrong. But accidents and mistakes do happen during play; if everyone is fully informed of the benefits of such an activity, a full risk assessment is completed with sound procedures and close supervision for managing the risk, these kinds of challenging activities shouldn't be ignored. We should be providing opportunities for all children to encounter or create uncertainty, unpredictability, and potential hazards as part of their play, so children learn to weigh up risk for themselves. It does not mean putting children in danger of serious harm.

So how do we manage risk when allowing young children to engage in woodwork? Close supervision and guidance of children when first using tools to establish rules of use will help to avoid injury through misuse and any child with behavioural difficulties or developmental delay who may not adhere to rules or use them safely may need ongoing close supervision. Children can be taught how to avoid hitting their fingers with a hammer by showing them firstly how to hold the hammer at the end, with all fingers wrapped around it, and then to tap lightly at first then move their fingers away as they hit harder. Children should wear goggles to avoid sawdust in their eyes and there should be strict rules minimising the children who can be at the workbench at any time – even children stood nearby are at risk from a moving tool so other children should stand clear. Children should be shown how to use sandpaper to avoid splinters, how to hammer down nails properly to avoid protruding nails, and informed about why nails should never be removed from the work area. When using a saw, the wood should first be firmly and slowly gripped in the vice and two hands must be used to hold the saw, keep it in a straight line and don't press too hard - let the saw do the work.

Young children will often make up their design as they go along: it's the process of learning that's important here, not the end result, so children shouldn't be turned off by insisting on a design first – we wait until a child voluntarily approaches the workbench, then take it from there. Every child is different; one child's idea of a risky situation might be another's idea of something easy-peasy. Children shouldn't be forced to do anything that they feel is beyond them, or encouraged to go any further than they feel safe.

What about the girls?

There is no reason why woodwork should be aimed particularly at boys – girls too should be equally encouraged

to take part. But this activity may well appeal more to boys and may help parents and educators support a child in achieving developmental milestones in a very different way. A way of enticing reluctant girls to the woodworking area may include having a 'girls only' day and displaying images where women are depicted as construction workers. Woodwork topics such as constructing a fairy house, castles or a minibeast hotel may also inspire girls.

However, if the activity is presented in a non-specific gender way, as would be done by an Early Years professional, gender issues would be rare - "Woodwork provides an excellent strategy for creating an inclusive, non-sexist and fulfilling environment that invites each and every child to be successful."*

*(Huber, 1999, 'Woodwork with young children – you can do it!')

Our Nursery Gallery...



Dexter is completely absorbed by mixing petals and creating a potion at Hale



Even swashbuckling pirates know how to show their sensitive side – William and Rokas from Woodlands Pre-school



In Maple room at Elmscot, Al, Josh and Luke made their own Binoculars to look out of the window at the view



Molly, Zak, Lexi, Daniel and Olivia float boats which they have made themselves at Hale, seeing how much weight they can carry



Role play is essential to early learning and gives children the opportunity to repeat and understand behaviour they experience themselves: Lani at Hale gives her baby a lovely bath



Jessica excitedly making marks in the foam; this is the beginning of her learning to write...

George, Evie and Bella are taking care of carrots, swede, lettuce, beetroot and spring onions at the Woodlands allotment



Isaac, Thomas, Emilia and Billy making delicious mud soup in Elmscot's Mud Kitchen



Harrison, Alfie and Cyrus from Otters at Woodlands made masks and acted out the Billy Goat Gruff story in the garden

A National Champion!

Evie from Woodlands' Squirrel room recently took part in the Birmingham National Games amongst 400 other athletes on behalf of the Dwarf Sports Association. Evie entered the Tennis Ball Throwing and Frisbee Throwing contests and she very proudly achieved a Silver Medal in the 10-Meter Run. Well done Evie!



Jeremy, Willow & Frankie drive their own Thomas the tank engine at Hale



Jacob and George from the Rabbits at Woodlands are having a whale of a time splashing around in the water and developing their grasping skills

Children in Beech at Elmscot finally meet their beautiful butterflies as they learn about life cycles



Evan and Teddy from Woodlands Pre-school created this amazing structure out of large wooden blocks



Sophia likes the colours and textures of the ribbon play at Hale



Ellis enjoyed making and modelling her May Day Crown at Elmscot



Amelia, Jacob, Taylor & Alex create their own car from giant wooden blocks at Hale



genesis

preventing breast cancer

Parents, children and staff were thrilled that Sally Dynevor from Coronation Street was able to join us at Hale Day Nursery to support our "Genesis Tea Party Challenge" in May. Parents and children generously baked mouthwatering cakes for a lovely Tea Party in the afternoon. The Tea Party, along with a raffle offering prizes of a hamper, wine, chocolates and vouchers, all donated by parents, raised over £500.

Sally is a patron of Genesis which is the UK's only charity entirely dedicated to the prediction and prevention of breast cancer. Anyone requiring further information should see their website www.genesisuk.org. Thank you to Sally, parents, children and staff for making it such a lovely day!



Sally Dynevor of Coronation Street joins Max, Hale's Manager Rachael Lyons and Deputy Manager Stacey Thompson-Child for our Tea Party

EXTRA EXTRA EXTRA curricular value ordinary

Free extra-curricular sessions run by specialist professionals.

Italian Language & Culture	Woodlands, Wed (Preschool)	Children develop their knowledge and understanding of the world as they become aware of other languages.
JittaBugs Baby Sign & Play	Elmscot, Mon (Willow & Chestnut, Maple) Woodlands, Tues (0-2s) Hale, Wed (0-2rs)	Jittabugs explore the baby's senses including touch, vision, sound and smell using bubbles, mirrors, scarves, feathers, parachutes, balls, fabrics, puppets, musical instruments & more.
Drama Tots	Woodlands, Thurs (2-3s)	Drama4Tots provides fun and creative drama sessions inspiring young imaginations.
Stretch n' Grow	Elmscot, Tues (Beech) Hale, Fri (2-5s) Woodlands, Mon (2-5s)	At Stretch 'n' Grow, children learn about how their bodies work, whilst joining in fun physical activities.
Little SuperStars	Elmscot, Thurs (Oak)	Little SuperStars' fun and active sports sessions to develop coordination, flexibility and balance.

In addition, Elmscot Day Nursery will be shortly introducing special Friday activities geared to the development stage of the children using our own staff specialist skills. We are finalising the ideas, but plans include Heuristic Sessions for Chestnut, Movement & Dance for Willow, Baking for Maple, Ball Skills for Beech and Dance sessions for Oak.



THE DONKEY SANCTUARY

Elmscot Day Nursery has adopted Toby from the Donkey Sanctuary, founded in 1969 by Dr Elisabeth Svendsen MBE. The charity cares for and protects one of the world's most hard working and humble creatures. Toby, who we hope will visit us soon, is a donkey mastermind full of ingenious ideas for launching raids on the feed store cupboard. He came into the sanctuary's care from a petting farm at a theme park in the north of England and lives at the donkey assisted therapy centre in Manchester. www.thedonkeysanctuary.org.uk



team training

Members of the Nursery teams have attended the following training since March:

- © **First Aid (refresher or initial certificate):** Ivana, Rachel, Terri, Leah, Helen B, Mrs Naylor, Jo, Chloe, Becky CB, Ania, Sharon, Rachael, Stacey, Mrs Macintyre, Abbie, Nancy, Saraya, Sue, Diana, Katie, Kathy, Jean, Claire, Carla, Mrs Homersham, Michelle, Danielle, Hannah, Gemma, Kerry
- English as an additional language:** whole Elmscot team
- © **Revised EYFS:** whole Woodlands team; whole Elmscot team, Wendy, Nicola, Laura

© **Safeguarding Level 1:** Chloe, Helen B, Kelly M, Becky CB, Becky D, Sharon, Terri, Holly, Laura, Abbie, Karen, Ami, Kerry, Katie, Jenny, Fehmida

© **Safeguarding-Professional Abuse:** Ivana

© **Food Safety & Hygiene:** Ivana, Miriam, Becky D, Rachel, Terri, Abbie, Janty, Holly, Laura

Congratulations to all staff and particularly Carla from Elmscot and Miriam from Woodlands, who both recently achieved their Early Years Foundation Degree with Merit. Thank you to all the team members who work so hard to keep their training up to this high standard.