

Last week the children enjoyed talking about growing things and they noticed how well everything is growing in the garden. Don't forget to let us know if any of the sunflowers the children have at home come into flower, ours aren't yet at school.

We continued enjoying Eric Carle stories last week, including *The Quiet Cricket* and *The Bad-Tempered Ladybird*. We also read *Are you a ladybird?* A book that explains the ladybird lifecycle and what baby ladybirds look like. Some children found ladybirds in the garden, but we haven't found any babies yet. Our caterpillars are all now chrysalises and have been moved to the butterfly net ready for when they emerge as butterflies, hopefully in the next couple of weeks.

We also had a refocus on Summer last week as we highlighted the official first day of Summer and the Summer solstice, or longest day. We reminded ourselves of the features of Summer and compared it to the other seasons. This week and next we will think more about Summer activities and focus on outdoor activities such as making obstacle courses and starting to try out some races ready for Sports week at the end of term.

Best wishes

Ellie Green & Kelly McIlroy



Children's Sleep

We have noticed some of the children's behaviour has been a bit unusual for them and I'm sure many of them are sensing a change lies ahead. We are doing our best to talk the children through these changes, but I know many of the children will feel more settled after they have had their visits to their new class. Another factor this time of year can be sleep. It is difficult this time of year when the evenings are lighter, and the birds are singing early. We thought we'd offer some tips from various sources. Most of which I'm sure you are aware of, but if a reminder of just one idea helps a bit maybe it is worth it!

Firstly, how much sleep should 3-4-year-olds have? They should have 10-13 hours' sleep. Naps are usually stopping but for those who have a nap that shouldn't be more than an hour of the total.

What are the main issues at this age and what should be done about them? Pre-schooler sleep problems include procrastinating and resisting bedtime, getting out of their big beds when they wake at night, and developing night fears, or terrors. Stick to a bedtime routine and sleep schedule, make sure your child understands the rules and be consistent about enforcing them.

Using a nightlight can comfort children who might get scared of the dark, however work at this going off later, as research show children sleep better in the dark (a black out blind is brilliant!)

Here are some other Top Tips

- Avoid feeding your child big meals close to bedtime, and don't give sugary snacks or drinks near bedtime. Foods that combine protein and carbs, like oats with milk, or toast with natural peanut butter, form amino acids that act like tryptophan, the chemical that makes you feel sleepy. Other foods that aid sleep include yogurt, cheese, bananas, poultry, eggs and tuna.
- After dinner try to keep things calm and avoid stimulating activities. As bedtime approaches warn your child that bedtime is in five minutes or give him a choice -- "Do you want to go to bed now or in five minutes?" -- do this only once.
- Establish a consistent and relaxing bedtime routine that lasts between 20 and 30 minutes and ends in your child's bedroom. Avoid scary stories or TV. It's better to read a favourite book at night rather than a new one because it's familiar.
- Make bedtime special: When children feel loved, they tend to relax. However, avoid hugging, singing or rocking your child to sleep, because if they wake in the middle of the night, they may need you to sing or rock them back to sleep -- a condition known as sleep-onset association disorder. Instead, have your child get used to falling asleep with a transitional object, like a favourite blanket or stuffed animal.
- Make sure your child is comfortable. Clothes and blankets should not restrict movement, and the bedroom temperature shouldn't be too warm or too cold. Children with sleep-friendly bedrooms -- dark, cool and quiet, -- tend to sleep better than those with lots of distractions.
- If your child calls for you after you've left his room, wait a few moments before responding. This will remind them that they should be asleep, and it will give them the chance to soothe themselves and even fall back asleep while waiting for you. If your child comes out of their room after you've put them to bed, walk them back and gently but firmly remind them that it's bedtime. Keep interactions minimal from this point.
- Give your child tools to overcome worries. These can include a torch or a large stuffed animal to 'protect' him.
- You might want to set up a reward system to get things started. Each night your child goes to bed on time and stays there all night, they get a star. After three stars, they earn a small treat.

All content here has been gathered from various sources over the years and is based on advice given by doctors and other health professionals. However, it should be considered as opinion only. Always seek the direct advice of your own doctor in connection with any questions or issues you may have regarding your child's health.