

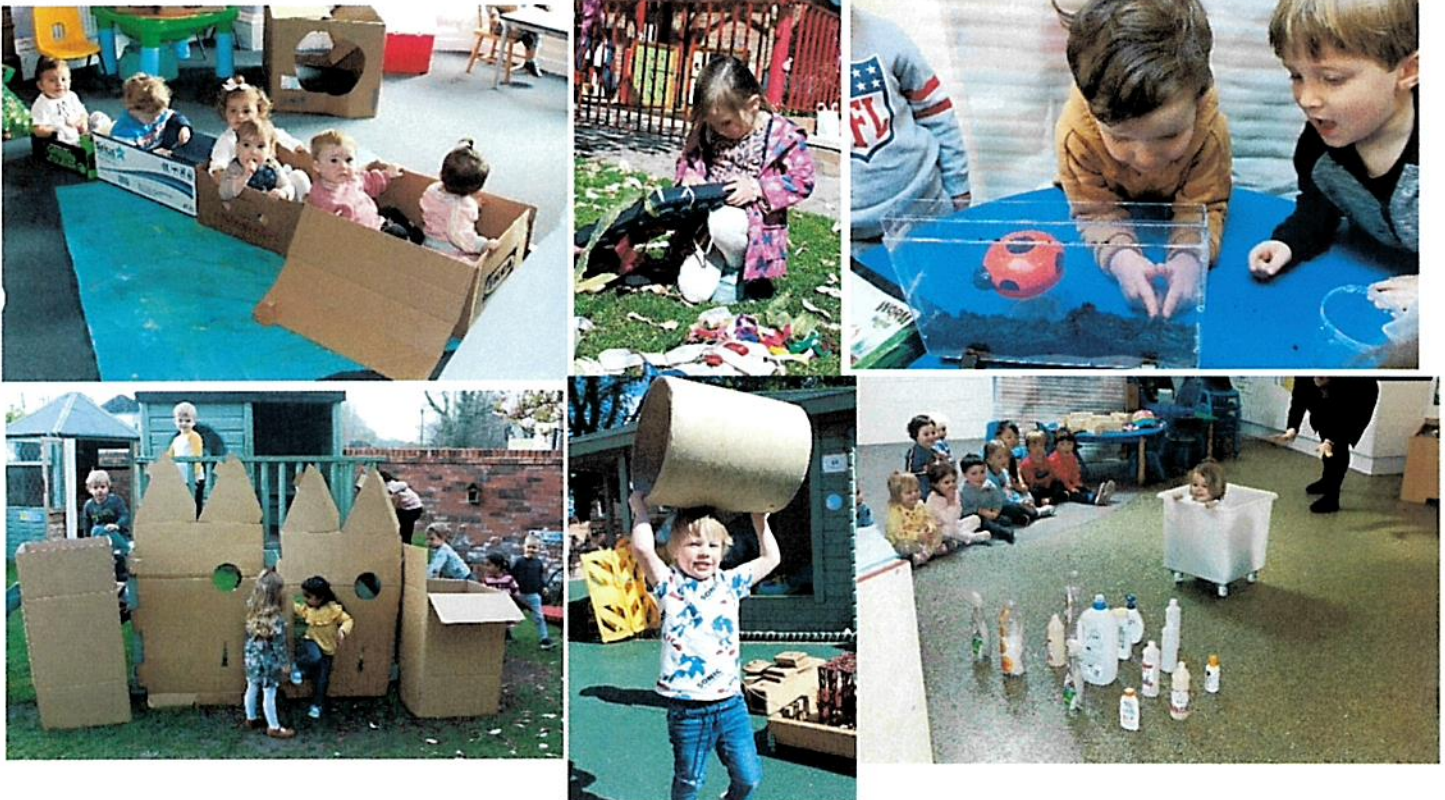


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Dear Parents,

April 2021

Doesn't the sunshine make all the difference?! We have had a lovely month at Monkton, lots going on and lots of time spent outdoors. As you know we channelled 'The Curiosity Approach' for our No Toys Week and I was so impressed seeing the activities each room planned each day – so many lovely ideas. All of the children were really engaged, and we observed so much interesting imaginative play and problem-solving. We found that the open-ended play really lent itself to improving vocabulary and communication as well as children explained their games to each other. In particular, Oranges & Lemons Forest School Day was a huge success, the children really enjoyed doing some woodwork and building dens and natural artwork. We noticed how children were beautifully behaved all day, even lunchtime in the tent was a quiet hubbub of chatter despite being squished in together! I'm sure you all notice that a quick trip to the park can do wonders when your child is having a 'challenging' day and we certainly saw the benefits of the outdoors even with a big group. We are now thinking that Oranges & Lemons will do a Forest School Day 4 times a year to experience each season, so more fun to come... (although I'm not sure they will be as excited when it gets to the winter one...!).







....that's quite a lot of photos isn't it, sorry I got carried away it is just too hard to choose!

OK onto some actual news in the newsletter! Some of you may know that Tara (Bananas) will be leaving us for a few months to go on a child protection placement to complete her degree in Social Work. We will also be saying goodbye to Erin (Apples) at the end of May as she will going off on her maternity leave. Luckily we will be getting both of them back in due course but in the meantime we have had to have a little reshuffle. Fortunately, Lucy had come to us a couple of months ago to do some holiday cover in Bananas as an agency temp. We immediately liked her, she was fabulous with the children and just fitted in straight away, so we are delighted that she will now be joining Monkton permanently. She has her NVQ Level 3 and she will be full time in Bananas from May. We are sure she will quickly become a strong member of the Monkton team.

A few points to note:

- Oranges & Lemons Parents – if you have not yet let me know which school your child is going to please let me know asap. If you can also confirm your child's leaving date that would also help us a lot, especially if you plan to leave before the end of term. If you need any help with appeal letters then just let me know, I'm always happy to do a letter of support if needed.
- We have had quite a few last minute parties recently – we really want to make sure that every child has a special day on their birthday so if you will be wanting Lydia to bake cakes for their nursery party please could you make sure that you give at least a week's notice. If your child is not in on their birthday we are happy to do a party on a different day, but again please make sure we have a week's notice.
- On the subject of cakes, our Marg Carter in Cherries has just started a cake business – we can confirm they are AMAZING, she truly has a gift. Please follow her on Instagram @carterscakesandbakes – and then get ordering!
- We don't usually advertise parents' businesses but I thought with the impact of Covid it would be nice for us to put together a little booklet with anything you would like to advertise? And we can all then hopefully support one another to get back to 'normal'. Just email me with something I can cut & paste into a document and I'll try and put something together.
- We are now fully booked for 2021 and 2022, and we are filling up fast for 2023. As you know Apples places are very limited as we only have 12 children per day in Apples. A number of parents have contacted us recently looking for places for new babies and we have had to disappoint them, which we hate! Please, please, please get in touch as soon as you know you are pregnant if you will want a place, we are very good at keeping secrets in the office!
- Having considered the 'roadmap out of Covid' and the updated Early Years government guidance ( [Actions for early years and childcare providers during the coronavirus \(COVID-19\) outbreak - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/actions-for-early-years-and-childcare-providers-during-the-coronavirus-covid-19-outbreak) ) we feel that after some previous false starts, it is appropriate for Wavy Davy to return to do Gymtots sessions from 17<sup>th</sup> May. He will do sessions with all classes on the same day, but sessions will be in the garden or undercover area, he will wash hands between each session, and he will wear a mask throughout. I will amend the Risk Assessment to include this. As usual he will alternate which day he comes in each week so that all children get to enjoy the sessions. I trust that you all agree with this decision in the light of the reducing restrictions and lower transmission statistics, but if you have any concerns then do contact me for a chat / email, I am always happy to talk things through.
- In the hope of the roadmap going to plan, we have decided to tentatively plan a summer event for the children as usual. We thought as many won't be getting a summer holiday this year, we would bring the holiday to them with a 'Monkton Staycation' theme. So Ian is starting to dig out a big sandpit, we will have paddling pools and English seaside games (hook a duck / whack a mole / tin can alley etc), a visit from an ice cream van and donkey rides. I think I may be more excited than the children. So all being well that will be on Friday 2 July. As usual with the summer event if your child is not usually in on a Friday they are still invited, it will probably be 2.00-4.30 but I will get back to you with definite details nearer the time.

That's all for now – wishing you all a lovely Spring full of hope and happiness.

Love from Eve, Sue, Lydia, Noreen, and all the staff at Monkton xxx

