

Bear Park from Home

Dear Parents of Bear Park,

There most certainly is a coolness in the air and we hope that with this edition that we find you all warm, well and safe in your 'bubble'.

If you have any ideas, activities or suggestions that you wish to share for future content possibilities for this newsletter please feel free to send them through to me - sue@bearpark.co.nz.

Stay warm and safe
Sue & the Bear Park Team

Construction at Home

The construction spaces within our classrooms at Bear Park are popular areas of play for almost all children, and for good reason. Creating something 3 dimensional using a variety of blocks and recycled materials promotes critical thinking and creative problem solving. Experimenting with how things can be stacked, balanced and arranged encourages a hands-on approach to developing awareness of weight, height, size, and shape and of course gravity!

To encourage your child/ren to think a little deeper and develop a focus in their construction play, try first to support them in envisioning what they would like to create. Just like an architect would, support your child to develop a clear concept of what they would like to build. Perhaps it is a home for a favourite toy, or magical castle like one seen in a favourite film or story. Once they have a clear idea of what they would like to create, invite them to draw their plan.

The process of drawing a plan helps children to develop the skills to make their ideas visible. Once they are happy with their plan, it's time to source the materials that will best help this plan come to life. For example if they are using lego, ask your child/dren which pieces will work best for certain elements of their design. If they are using wooden blocks, and your child's plan has some more extravagant details, you could perhaps search the house for other objects of recycled materials to represent these details such as paper towel rolls, plastic bowls or cups, empty boxes etc...

If your child isn't yet confident in their drawing skills, why not use your next walk in the neighbourhood to collect some inspiration? Invite your child to take a photograph of a building or space they might like to create at home, perhaps a playground they miss visiting or a beautiful church. Are there any unique structures in your neighbourhood that inspire you? Perhaps you could share this interest with your children.



Please do upload photographs of your adventures to StoryPark, We love seeing what you are getting up to. The teaching teams will be on hand to share our thoughts and answer any questions!

"Through their constructive play, a child will learn what will work and what will not. Trial-and-error is a great method in which to create structures and modify methods. Overcoming problems to build structures in a particular way will always aid creative thinking and problem solving skills." - (newbyleisure.com)

Online Resources

www.youngoceanexplorers.com is an amazing website made by a Father and Daughter team from New Zealand. If your kids are into the deep blue sea, rather than the skies above, this is your new go-to website.

Light and Materials

We hope you had a lot of fun encountering and playing with light whilst being inside and out and have delighted in the conversations that you have had with your child/ren in regards to that special friend that they have now discovered or rediscovered - "Their Shadow!"

It is always a very mystical concept "shadows" and offers us endless possibilities for stories to be told as our shadows change in visibility, disappear, reappear and change shape.

Perhaps the next step to enrich this experience further is to let your child/ren see the way that light behaves when it travels through different mediums instead of just air. What happens when you change this?

Again you can easily start testing an array of materials that you find around your house such as recycled items, which we often call "open-ended" materials as they encourage imagination as well as scientific discoveries.

We would suggest you start to experiment with transparent materials made from plastic and if you are using recycled materials remember to wash them well in soapy warm water and let them dry thoroughly. (This is an activity that your child/ren would probably love to do with or for you)

When choosing these transparent materials think about variety, the variety of textures, of opaqueness, of thickness, of flexibility and of transparency. Invite you child/ren to be part of this recycled material hunt and allow them the time to test these materials out as they find them. "Will this one work with light or is this one better?" "Can you see the light shining through this material or not?"

Once they have finalized the materials that they wish to use and depending on the light source, start experimenting by simply holding the material up into the light or shining the light onto them. Whilst doing this initial experimentation ask open-ended questions such as: "What can you see?" "What happens if...?"

Perhaps your child/ren could start to categorize these different transparent resources into 'like' groups so the ones that make fuzzy projections go here and the ones that make sharp ones go there and so on.... They could even choose the title for these various groups themselves. - "These are the ones I use if I want my shadow to look sparkly" or "these are the ones that I use if I want my shadow to look spooky"

The idea is to slow down and take a closer look at the finer details of what is happening with this experimentation. - "What happens to the light?" "Does the material change in any way?" "What happens if we change the angle or alter the light?" "What happens to the shadow when we use this material with the light?" "Is it different and how?"

When you are looking at the projections of the materials on the wall encourage your child/ren to recall past experiences they may have had. "What does it remind you of?" "Is there a story you could tell me?"

"The eye is always caught by light, but shadows have more to say". - Gregory Maguire



Stop Motion Movie Making

At Bear Park we believe that the rapidly evolving world of technology can be used as a way to enhance learning and can be used intelligently, rather than just a passive form of entertainment. This one way we can use our phones or tablets to engage children in meaningful experiences is called - Stop-motion movie making:

App:

Stop Motion Studio (iOS)
Stop Motion (Android)

Supplies needed:

iPad or android tablet
'Characters' (toys, natural or found materials)
'Props' (images for backgrounds, fabrics, recycled materials)

Creating a Stop-motion involves the process of taking a series of photographs and stitching them together to bring your movie to life. Fortunately with easy to use apps such as this one, while the task still takes time it is relatively simple to grasp. This makes this a fantastic project for siblings to work on together.

Invite your child/ren to collect 'characters' and 'props' and perhaps have a basket each for these, then find a suitable place where your movie can be filmed.

For inspiration you might like to view a few examples of stop-motion movies made by other children on YouTube. Lego is a really popular toy to work with when making these movies as it is often readily available and the characters can stand on their own.

This concept encourages children to think creatively and critically. They need to consider who their character is and how they would move and interact with the other characters or props.

Making a stop-motion movie takes time, and is an experience that builds determination, patience and persistence, a completed work is certainly something to be celebrated.

Perhaps after working on a film for a while your children might like to have a 'premier' to showcase their work with the family.

Think red carpet, dress ups and party food!!!



Yummy Soft Cookies

This is a quick and easy recipe that children and adults alike will love getting their hands into as well as enjoying with a glass of milk!

125g softened butter
1/4 cup brown sugar
2 tablespoons of maple syrup
2 tablespoons of vanilla essence
1 1/2 cups of plain flour
1 teaspoon baking powder
1 cup of milk chocolate drops or buttons

Preheat oven to 180C. Mix together ingredients - butter, sugar using an electric mixer.

Then add maple syrup, milk and vanilla, until well combined.

Mix in flour and baking powder, then add in the chocolate.

Mix using a wooden spoon then your hands to form a soft dough.

Roll into balls and place onto a lined or greased oven tray, push flat with a fork.

Bake at 180C for 12-15minutes or until golden.

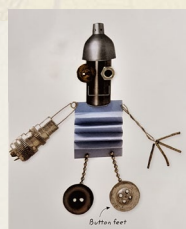
Leave to cool and then enjoy!



Collage Robots

Glue bits and pieces such as old screws and paperclips, onto photographs cut from old magazines to make a collage robot.

Robot Dog
Make a robot dog from bits and pieces!



Bolts and Buttons
Make a robot with old things that you find in a tool box or sewing box.



Extra tips:
Folding paper
Using photographs
Kitchen foil