



# BABIES & TODDLERS

From birth to pre-school



## Newsletter #5

Hello again! It seems odd typing this now because we ought to be getting ready for the first meeting of the summer term – never mind, it will happen one day.

I have some good news to share – the Abbey has gained the Eco-Church Bronze Award!

Helen and her team have worked so hard to satisfy the requirements of the scheme and they deserve this recognition. They are very grateful for your participation in the “Show the Love” green hearts project. Helen is making contact with various ‘green’ groups and will be happy to share ideas when we’re back in operation. The bulbs you planted in pots have grown really tall & we have pretty tulips in the garden at St Andrew’s. Did yours grow and have flowers?

I thought I’d suggest some activities that help to strengthen the muscles in the hands, as this is necessary before young children go on to acquire the fine motor skills needed for learning to write, thread laces, etc.

Using playdough is excellent for this. Encourage your children to knead and roll the dough. Use shape cutters or plastic knives or forks to add to the fun. They could roll out a long “sausage” and use sections to manipulate into the shapes of numbers.

### PLAYDOUGH RECIPE (uncooked)

**You will need:** 2 cups plain flour,  $\frac{3}{4}$  cup salt, 1 tablespoon cooking oil, squirt of washing up liquid (helps to make it pliable), food colouring (optional), water

Stir the flour and salt together. Add the oil and washing up liquid. Add the food colouring (if using) to the water – I start with 1cup and add small amounts to mix, gradually. It’s difficult to be precise because it can vary according to the humidity in the room, but add slowly and knead to a soft dough. The dough will keep for 3 -4 weeks if kept in a

zip-lock bag, or plastic container, & stored in the fridge. (Note – I make double this quantity for the playgroup!)

## PLAYDOUGH RECIPE (cooked)

**You will need:** 1 cup plain flour, ½ cup salt, 1 tablespoon cooking oil, 2 teaspoons cream of tartar, 1 cup of water, food colouring

Mix together and cook over a medium heat, stirring constantly.

Remove from heat and knead on wax paper (add the food colouring at this point if you like). Store in an airtight container.

## 3 EVERYDAY UTENSILS THAT EACH PRE-SCHOOLER SHOULD HAVE!

A paediatric occupational therapist I once worked with recommended that all young children should be encouraged to play with:

**1) a hand whisk** – fill a washing up bowl (or baby bath) with water and a squirt of washing up liquid and stand back while they whisk bubbles galore! Probably a good idea to do as an outdoor activity & use a plastic apron – or do the same activity at bath time, using bubble bath.

**2) a spatula (or fish slice)** – use this for games involving the transfer of lots of different objects, such as play food, small building blocks, small balls of playdough, etc. They could transfer the items from a table to a bowl, or use the play kitchen (if available).

**3) a pair of kitchen tongs** – use to pick up a variety of items, such as pieces of fabric, ribbons, small balls of wool, small plastic beakers, toy food, dolls' clothes, etc. Play a 'fishing game' moving the items from one basket (or box) to another.

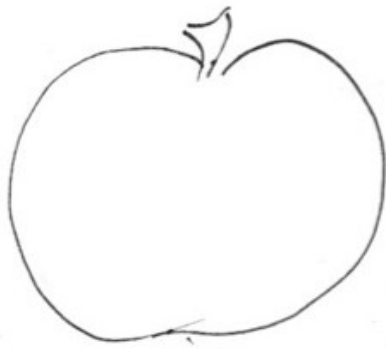
These activities are useful for the development of the hand muscles and improving hand-eye coordination. And children love doing them!

**Wendy has sent a picture for you to colour and use for counting sets.**

We hope you have a fun week! Best wishes, Sara and Wendy

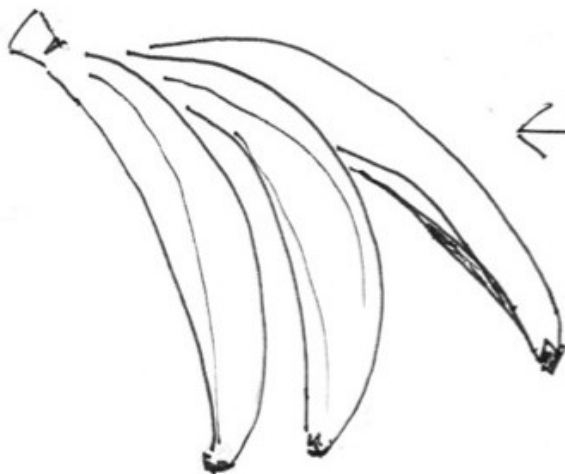
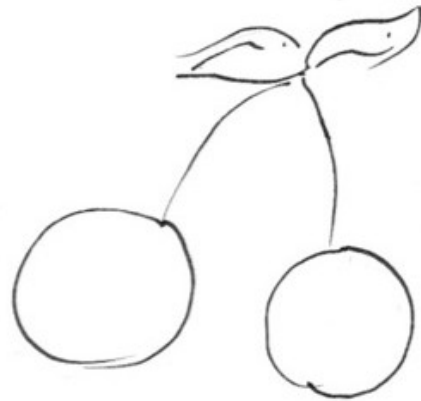
Contact Sara on 01386 710776 for more information

Why not take photos of any crafts or cooking that you do and upload to our Facebook page? We'd love to see what you've made!



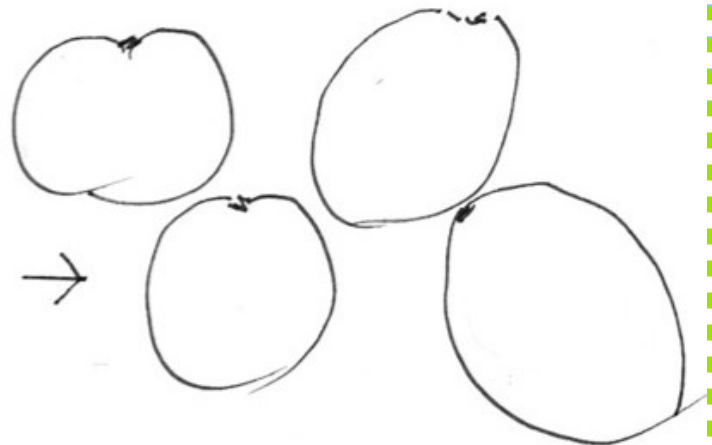
← 1 apple

2 cherries →



← 3 bananas

4 oranges →



Which fruit do you like best?  
Can you colour them?