

News Release

4th July 2011



Spring has finally sprung!

Spring is a wonderful time of year when the cold winter is fast disappearing and signs of new life are emerging. It is a great time to explore as the new season brings forth a host of fantastic learning opportunities. The weather may bring challenges but with the right clothing and a positive attitude, there are possibilities for experiences that are unique to this special time of year.

So wrap up warm and go on a spring treasure hunt. Look for the changes that are taking place around you. Are there any Snowdrops peeking through the earth or buds on branches starting to appear? Looking for green shoots and other signs of spring can really engage children and enable them to be mini detectives. It is not often that we take time to really stop and reflect, so let them do just that! Give them magnifying glasses and bug viewers. Take photographs each day and compare and contrast the changes. Nature really does provide a richness of things to see, touch and smell.

The birds will also start to be busy with their nesting. Have an easy identification chart at hand so the visiting birds can be named. Also make sure there is a well stocked bird table. Children like to feed the birds and observe them as they eat their tasty meals. There are feeders that can be placed on windows as well as cameras installed into bird boxes. Look out for signs of insects and other creatures emerging after their long winter sleep. Have a go at making mini beast habitats. Learn how to attract butterflies, bees and ladybirds to your settings. Keep an eye on which dwellings are the first to be inhabited. If you are lucky enough to have a pond, why not introduce this fascinating area which is teeming with interesting wildlife into learning.

Spring sees the birth of new life; the fields are full of baby lambs, as the cycle of life gets into full swing. This is the season for Mother Nature to replenish the natural world. Animals give birth, birds build nests and insects pollinate plants. If possible, take the children to a local animal farm where they can see and touch the new born animals; lambs, chicks and piglets. This is a great opportunity to explore how animals come into this world. Let the children observe how an egg hatches into a chick and eventually into a full grown hen. This is a great opportunity to play animal families to link mothers and babies i.e. cow with calf, lamb with sheep, duckling and duck and the chick with the hen.

Setting aside an area for growing things can be really beneficial. Choose plants that are hardy and quick to germinate. Plant a variety of plants from tomatoes to giant sunflowers! It's even better if you can go on to eat your own crop so the children can see it from seed to plate. If you do not have a garden area be creative with an assortment of planters.

Build a scarecrow in the garden. TTS offer a wonderful scarecrow priced at £34.95. Collect adult sized clothing, a shirt, jeans, jacket, gloves and hey presto the children have a wonderful new companion to join in outdoor fun. There is no limit to dressing the scarecrow; you can dress it in other costumes, a superhero, a pirate or Little Bo Peep to name just a few!

You can also theme the garden area's with ideas from popular books or nursery rhymes such as Mary Mary Quite Contrary and have shells and pretty maids in a row.

There are various spring festivals to learn about. Easter brings with it the opportunity to learn about new life as well as all the celebrations that are associated with it. Go on an egg hunt leaving recorded messages on talking postcards or buttons as to where to find the treasure. Making giant nests for the Easter Bunny can be great fun. Have access to straw, wool, ribbon and shredded paper and let the children weave and carefully craft the nest shape. Have weaving frames all around

the outdoor setting. It could be gardening mesh, willow or ribbons. Have mobile, wall and handheld versions. Hide a wooden, decorated egg under a tree or bush for the children to discover. Then weave stories and heighten their imaginations by pondering the question as to who has laid this magical egg and what will hatch from it? Will it be a snake, a dragon or a chick?

Mother's Day is an ideal time to inspire imaginations. Small decorative flower pots make thoughtful Mother's Day gifts. Simply choose a small terracotta pot and get the children to paint it and decorate it. Plant a few seeds and watch it transform into a fabulous gift for mum! Encourage them to think about their mums and what they mean to them. Let them express their feelings through their pictures and words on the cards. Don't forget to put the date on the back of the card or gift, as mums will appreciate this as they look back over the years and are able to recall when it was made.

Spring is an exciting time of year to participate in fun activities and learn about all the new changes that come with the season. Rebirth is amongst the most common themes, with baby animals being born, flowers poking through the ground and new colours showing through. When Spring has sprung there are always lots of new and interesting things to discover.