

Christmas in the Nursery 2024

Throughout the festive season we prepared the children for changes in their routines; although this can be a happy engaging time, it can also be a worrisome and confusing period for vulnerable children.

We appreciate in particular that Christmas can bring unsettling feelings for many reasons. Parents often share these feelings with their child's key person daily concerns as the festive period rolls along. This ensures staff understand the child's emotions and needs better.

Nursery practitioners take each child's individual needs and parent's views and wishes into consideration when planning the curriculum. As with all celebrations, we encourage everyone to indulge in the moment, participating in activities, to get the best feel for a celebration, particularly Christmas.

Children engaged in clay-model making, along with decorating frames as gifts for families. Children were focused on placing large sparkling gemstones onto card frames. Lots of discussion around the colours and textures, as well as the hand-eye coordination it took to place the gemstones. This was quite a task! We encourage more of the process, the talking about the task and the engagement than looking for an end product.

Children were able to engage in baking, arts and crafts, reading seasonal stories, along with looking at different foods we prepare for families at Christmas. Every time the nursery doors were opened, music, singing and laughing could be heard, all in equal measure. The children are kept at the center of what we provide daily. The nursery team are amazing in creating a calm but equally happy harmony within all areas of the nursery, including outdoors.



The Christmas diners were once again eaten with gusto, our party days once more entertained the children, with organised activities, special creations to share with families and the excitement of meeting Father Christmas if they wished. Children either dressed up in their own seasonal clothing or were able to wear nursery dressing up clothes. No pressure for anyone to wear anything they did not already have or we could not provide. Party days remain a tradition for us and bring with them a sense of warmth and belonging.



The Family Haven would like to put on record a huge **THANK YOU** to all the companies, groups and individuals who donated to the families this Christmas, we were so lucky once again especially to all who came to help us and our families. There are too many people to mention individually so we won't even try. Your generosity and caring touches our hearts. Also a huge **THANK YOU** to our Volunteers who gave their time to help us out during our two party days. We can't thank you all enough.



**Helping vulnerable families
to a brighter future
since 1988**

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Sue Andersson

The Family Haven
A company limited by
Guarantee
Registered Charity No
1088622

**31 Spa Road, Gloucester
GL1 1UY
Telephone: 01452 422971**

E-mail:
info@thefamilyhaven.com

www.thefamilyhaven.com

Halloween 2024



The children fully immersed themselves into the spooky season this year! In the month of October, we had a large donation of pumpkins and squash so the children decided to decorate them with stickers, paints and pens! And when the painted ones were dry children had lots of fun washing them up in the soapy water station. We had costumes out for the children to wear, some chose to be witches and others were cats or pumpkins. For some quiet time, the children enjoyed watching a Halloween film on the computer called Spookily the Square Pumpkin.



Our pre-schoolers enjoyed reading Room on the Broom so to extend their learning we gave them puppets to act the story out. We put a movie on to watch during quiet time. Before the children left we gave them colouring sheets to take home.



Circle time at The Family Haven



Circle time is an important part of our day, we use this time to sing our good morning song to everyone, discuss the days of the week, the weather and to announce our preschool helper. Circle time is a great way of developing children's looking, listening, speaking, concentration and social skills.

The children from all three groups enjoy sitting down for circle time; we usually ask the children to tidy up before we sit down and because the children enjoy circle time so much they are excited to help!

The children all know to find their own space and look at the grown up leading the session. Since introducing the days of the week into our circle time, many of our pre-schoolers know the names of all the days and are able to recognise some of the words written down. The children's favourite part of circle time is our 'days of the week' song, they get their hands together ready to clap for the song without being asked. Most of the children now join in with all the words. Our babies enjoy listening too; some will now clap along with us!

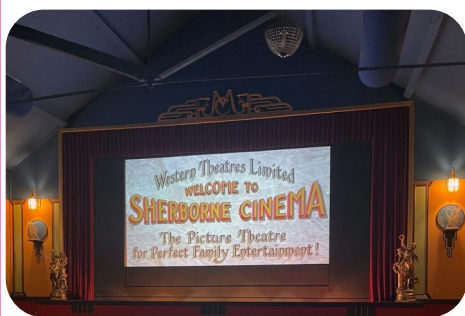
The children also enjoy discussing the weather; they know we talk about it after the days of the week. We all look out the window and say if it's sunny, raining or cloudy etc. We have the weather cards out in front of us and when the children have made a unanimous decision of what the weather is today; one child is asked to stick it on our circle time board along with our day of the week. The children do well to listen for their name and the rest of the group stay sat down and engaged.

When we choose the preschool helper, we write their name down first before saying it out loud. The children watch and some of the older children will try phonetically sounding it out along with the grown up. The preschool helper is then asked to stick the circle time board to the wall and collect their sticker. Once circle time is finished, the children wait and listen to the next instruction.

We love circle time at The Family Haven!

Trip to Sherborne Cinema

Cinema experience



To round off the end of our Christmas celebrations, we were able to organise a cinema experience for the families. We decided to keep our trip local and planned a visit to the Sherborne cinema in Gloucester. We planned to see Moana 2, as we knew this would suit the majority of our families. Sherborne cinema is a lovely family friendly, very traditional cinema. The staff were very helpful, prior to the trip and on the day.

Some families walked with staff from The Family Haven, to meet everyone at the cinema. We tried to keep momentum up, to make sure we arrived in time for the start of the movie. This was quite a task! Children wanted to stop and look in all the exciting shop fronts, which was quite understandable as they were filled with Christmas goodies. However, we knew the movie would not be held back as there would be another showing straight after. Upon arrival, nursery staff helped parents find seating, kept excited children in seats while others organised pram storage.



The children enjoyed the movie, enjoyed eating the treats shared with them and everyone seemed to have a great time. Following the movie, we all met up at St Mary's Congregational Church for a Christmas buffet. Everyone left with full stomachs, happily chatting about the movie. We gave each family sweet treat bags to take home.

We would like to say thank you to the Holiday Activities and Food Program (HAF) project for providing the whole experience for our families. Having the funding helped bring a special closure to our seasonal celebrations.



Children in Need—Pudsey and Peppa Pig party



This year for Children in Need, we enjoyed a Pudsey and Peppa pig party at The Family Haven. All of us (big and small!) had the opportunity to dress up as our favourite characters or in a selection of hats, glasses, bracelets and shoes from the dressing up box. There were some fabulous combinations!

Throughout the morning, we played with small world Peppa pig toys, acting out familiar scenes we had seen on the TV. We also had lots of fun with a Peppa pig tea set, making cups of tea and cakes for our friends. A highlight of our morning was decorating biscuits with Pudsey spots and lots (and lots and lots) of squeezey icing. We had to use all of our hand muscles to squeeze it out of the tubes. Thankfully, some did land on our biscuits as well as our fingers and tongues!



After lunch, we had lots of fun with balloons and bubbles and a game of pass the parcel. Unwrapping the layers was very exciting. Throughout the week, we had been practising the Piggie Wiggle dance. During our party, there were many occasions to show off our best Piggie wiggle moves. We were all very good at shaking our curly tails! We finished off the day with lots of yummy snacks at a Peppa Pig picnic.





Andrea Reynolds from Mothers Union, Gloucester Diocese. She was lovely with the clients.

The clients enjoyed a Christmas flower arranging activity, guided by the expert hands of Andrea and Catherine from the Mothers' Union. Andrea began by demonstrating how to cut the plants and position them in the oasis block. She

then showed how to build up the foliage before adding flowers and festive decorations. Although initially hesitant, the clients soon became fully engaged and created some stunning arrangements. Each display was unique but equally beautiful. Some clients have chosen to leave their creations to decorate the tables during the Christmas party days.



Lunch as usual was amazing! A turkey roast with all the trimmings was expertly cooked by Katren and served to the clients by Lucy (Centre Manager) and Gail (Family Support).



English class began in September 2024. Oksana our teacher has inducted five mums on to the course, all of different levels. With sickness and the family's chaotic lifestyles, attendance has been a challenge. However, the mums all took an exam in December and I am pleased to say that they all passed.

The Family Haven Staff would like to say **BIG CONGRATULATIONS** to the mums who took the English class and have passed.



We would like to say a **BIG THANK YOU** to David Oldfield, Company Director of Blue Sky Signs Ltd, and his employees for the excellent printing of all our Newsletters and Annual reviews over the past couple of years.

Telephone: 01452 260760

Email: info@blueskysigns.co.uk

Website: www.blueskysigns.co.uk

Quote of the Month

"Strength does not come from winning. Your struggles develop your strengths. When you go through hardships and decide not to surrender, that is strength." — Arnold Schwarzenegger



Imagine the difference you can make

Did you know that legacies are a vital source of income for charities? To find out more about leaving a gift in your will we have a page on our website with information we hope is useful:

www.thefamilyhaven.com/how-you-can-help/leave-a-legacy/

When you "Leave a Legacy", you're enriching the lives of other people and supporting and sustaining charitable work for future generations

Become a Friend

Why become a Friend? As a Friend of The Family Haven, you will be supporting the Trustees and staff in helping provide the services our families so desperately need.

Your regular subscriptions and offers of voluntary help are invaluable and support us in delivering our aims.

Call 01452 422971 for an application form or

Download it from <http://bit.ly/YtnESd>



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