Developing Independance

Welcome to our third curriculum post - all about developing independence.

Why is independence so important?
Independence gives children a sense of satisfaction; they have an increased sense of self, building important life long skills such as pride, resilience and determination. In becoming more independent, children also gains a sense of importance and belonging. They feel they are able to contribute to the world and social life surrounding them whether in nursery or home. They also feel more reassured within their friendship group. A major benefit of encouraging child independence is that children learn how to help those around them.

Whilst teaching them new skills you also help them to develop qualities such as patience, concentration, self-help, cooperation, self-discipline and self-trust.

However, learning new skills isn't always easy and to ensure that children don't become frustrated, it can be helpful to plan for moments of developing independence. For example, getting themselves dressed when you're running short of time can lead to negative feelings and an unwillingness towards other independent tasks in the future. It's also important that you praise the effort - try not to take over from your child if they are struggling, but rather offer support and guidance.

The holidays is a great time to practice some of these skills!

Home Involvement:

*Encourage your child to put their coat on by themselves - at nursery we teach them to lay their coat on the flour; stand by the hood; put their hands into their sleeves and lift it over their head - watch this short video to see how it's done! https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-FaxBoCvNqM Once they have this technique mastered, teach them how to pull their sleeves the right way round. Also look at how the zip works - start off by connecting the bottom, but leave your child to pull the zip up. Then support them to start the zip independently.

*Encourage your child to dress themselves. When you have the time, leave your child to dress themselves. If they become frustrated then support them, but with-draw your support as soon as you feel able. If clothes get put on back-to-front them leave them that way, so your child finishes with a sense of success!

*Putting their shoes on independently - talk to them and show them the process first, so they have an understanding of what to do and why. For example - pull the strap this way so you've got more room. If it is a new skill for your child, you may want to do one shoe for them so they can see how it's done and then have a go - without having to think about which foot each shoe goes on.

*Preparing foods. At nursery all the children help to prepare snack and we use 'safe' knives with this activity. Initially you can encourage your child to cut soft foods (bananas) and when you both have confidence with this you can move onto harder foods (apples).

*Spreading butter on toast. This is something we do regularly at Nursery and the children are supported to spread their own butter. Initially your child may need your hand over theirs to guide them. To start with your child is likely to have areas with no butter and areas with thick butter on. Don't insist that the butter is 'correctly' spread or take over and finish the task for your child - as this will reduce the feeling of accomplishment for them.

*Involve your child in decisions to enable them to have a sense of responsibility and control over their lives. Which park shall we go to today? Which story would you like to read? What jumper do you want to wear? What shall we have for dinner? Talking with them about their reasons is great for building up their identity, but also very important for developing their communication and language skills.

* Helping with household jobs - putting toys away, tidying up after a meal, washing up etc.

We would love to see pictures / videos of your child's growing independence on tapestry, either in these areas or others you've supported them with to foster independence.

