



Looking In

week 4

Hazeldene Family Centre
Learning and Growing Together

This week one group of children started their inquiry with the question, Why do birds build nests?

Child N – “Bird’s don’t have houses and they aren’t allowed in hotels”.



Child M – “The birds make nests to keep their little eggs warm, if the eggs get cold they won’t hatch and the baby birds will die and that will be so sad.”



Child I – “ some eggs are big and some eggs are small so some birds will need big nests and some can just have a little nest.”



Child D – It's tricky getting the string out the glue, I don't think the birds would like glue on their feathers, they wouldn't be able to flap their wings and fly.”

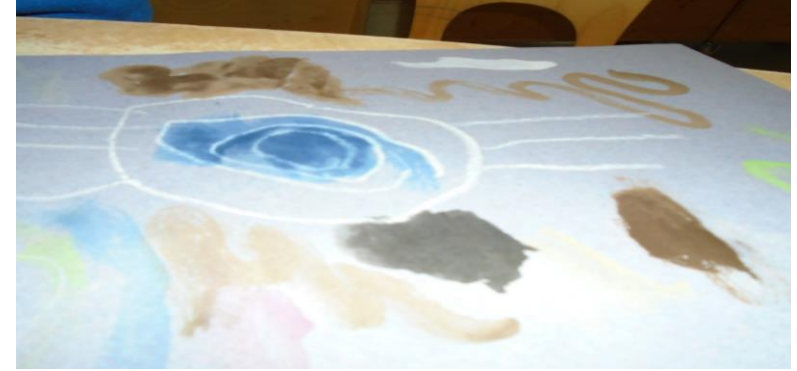


- We started experimenting with a variety of materials to make our nests.

Child I – “It's icky, so so stickily.”



Children in another group spent time looking through RSPB magazines that showed pictures of various birds' nests which could either be large or small in size depending on the bird creating it. In addition, the children were able to identify that these nests were round and then got smaller in size the closer it got to the centre, just like a spiral.



The children were invited to record their interpretation of these nests, they were provided with paper, crayons and watercolours. Through the use of these resources the children were able to be artistically expressive as well as have fun in creating these nests.



Child A - "It's a circle."

Child B - "Birds lay eggs in nests."

Child C - "The egg is a circle."

Child C - "There are lines in the nest."

Child D - "I'm making a love heart nest."

Child E - "It's like a snail shell, the nest. It goes round and round."

There was great excitement in the playroom as the children were eager to engage with the learning experience relating to the creation of a bird's nest. To help the children familiarise themselves with the natural materials that birds source when creating their nests, we revisited the discussion that we had the day prior. From this discussion, the children were able to gather the necessary materials, however, due to us not being outside that day, we talked about the texture and features of mud. From this conversation, the children described it as squidgy, squelchy and sticky. From these descriptors, we set about making our own mud from playdough.

Child A - "Mud is squelch, it is sticky."

Child B - "The sticks are sticky."

Child C - "The nest is a circle, nests are different colours and nests are different shapes."

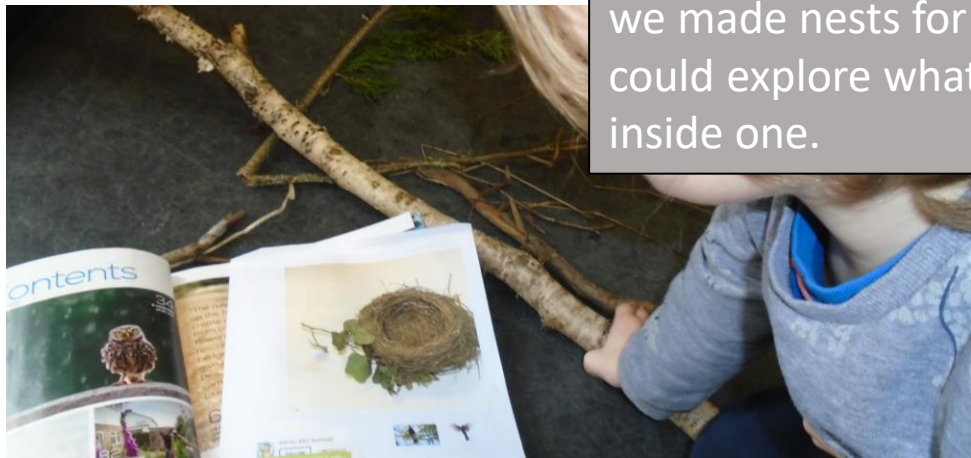
Child D - "Twigs, leaves and moss goes into nests."

Child E - "I'm using sticks for the nest ,the nest is a circle."



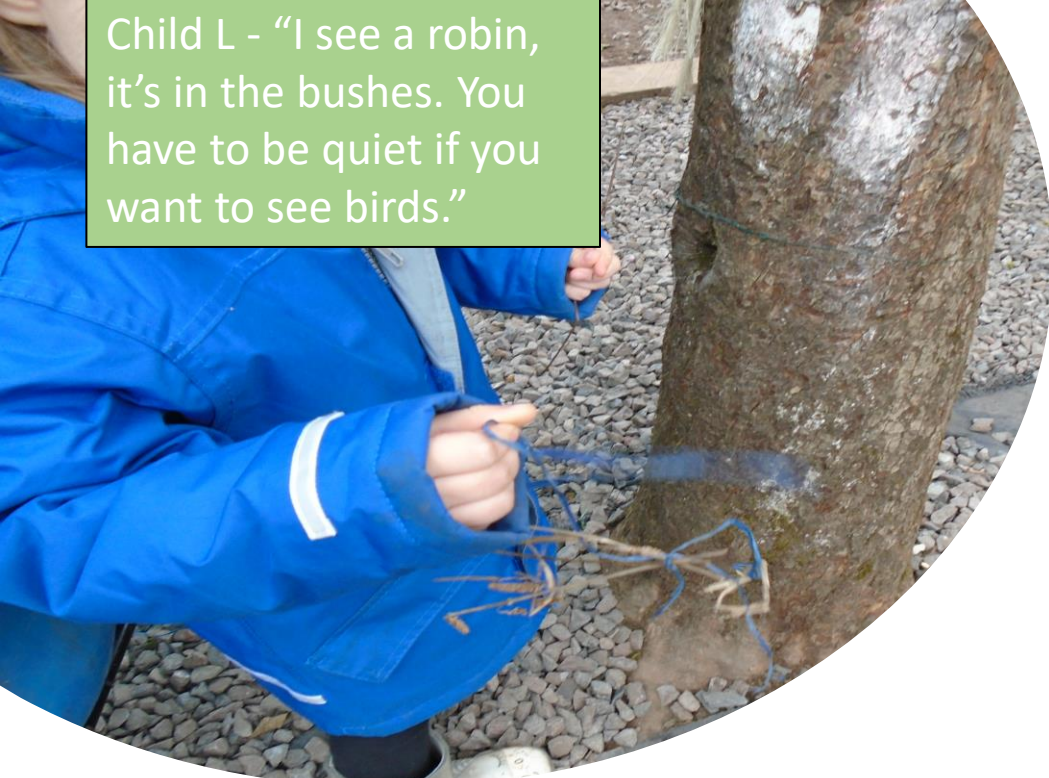


We looked at books with pictures of nests, we collected materials, and then we made nests for ourselves so we could explore what it was like to be inside one.

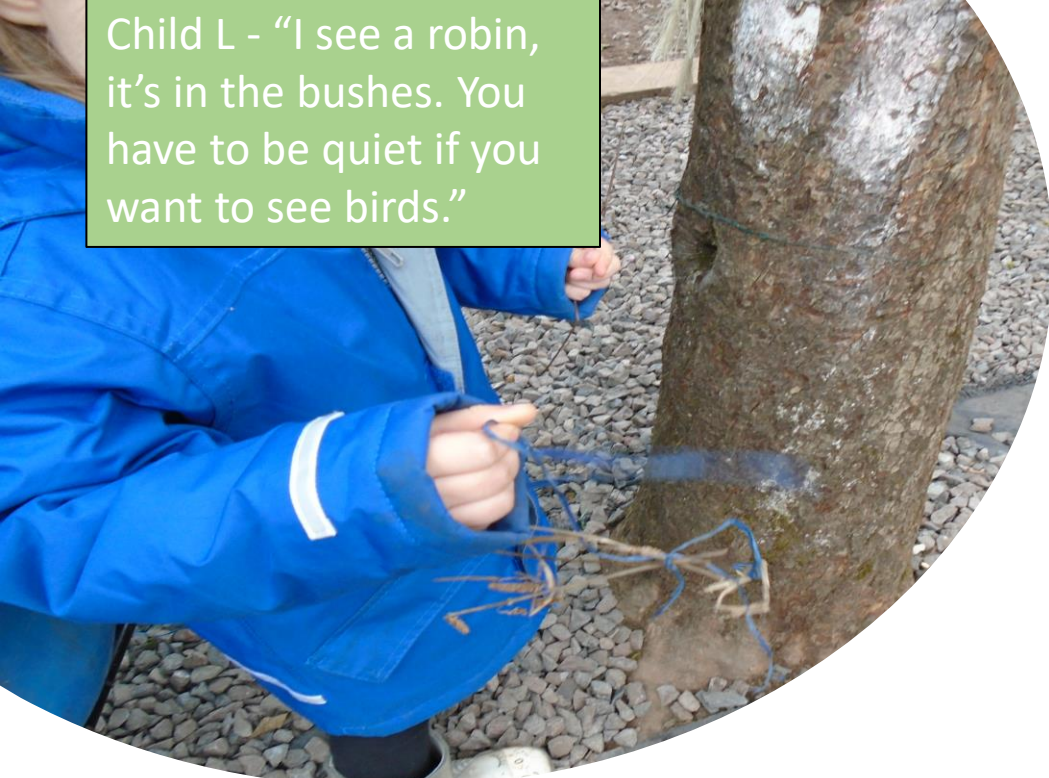


- The children made excellent use of the natural resources provided experimenting, designing then creating their own nests.






Child L - "I see a robin, it's in the bushes. You have to be quiet if you want to see birds."



"Child B – I see a really big woodpecker in my garden."



Child D - "I see a big crow in the tree."

Child B - "Birds eat worms. I don't like worms because they are slimy just like snails and slugs."

On day 4 of our *Looking In inquiry* the children had the opportunity to go out into the community to bird watch. Here we had hung out various natural resources for the birds to collect from our garden "Bird Shop", we were not able to see any, therefore, we took the opportunity to go for a walk to a quieter area where we could watch the birds in their natural habitat. To the children's delight they saw crows, some sparrows, a robin and more.



During our woodland walk, we looked in holes that we found in trees and discussed what we could see and who might live there. We then came across a den that had been built. We were able to 'look in' to this and also go 'in' it ourselves! This led us to build our own.

Reflection

Questioning the children in a different way may have helped their understanding. More time could have been taken to explain the difference between looking 'in' as opposed to looking 'through' something. Once we got to the woods, the children were better able to differentiate between the two through exploration and further discussion. The children were extremely enthusiastic, hardworking and committed to finishing off the den over a number of days and documented this through art and design activities within the nursery using playdough, clay, wooden sticks, hay etc. Parents commented on how much their children were discussing the den at home.



Reflections

The learning experiences centered around the topic of “looking in” has run for a whole week within the Family Centre where the children have been gaining further knowledge on how birds survive, how they make their nests and which birds are residents within their local community.

Having engaged the children with these 5 provocations, each one, has proven to be extremely beneficial in developing, supporting and strengthening the children’s language skills whether they be verbal, listening or watching other people’s body language or facial expressions. Skills which are essential in all social settings.

The positive outcomes drawn from these interactions were clear when the children learned new words, explored ways to express their thoughts and feelings beyond that of verbal communication and the fact that the learning experiences interested both the girls and boys which pleased me in that they were all gender neutral. In terms of negatives drawn from these experiences, I am struggling to find any as the children enjoyed engaging with them and I could observe the language skills that were being used by each of the children.

In terms of usefulness, I can definitely use these experiences again as they are a great mechanism for scaffolding the children’s learning such as the “bird shop” activity which then led onto the creating of a bird’s nest.

Reflecting upon my own performance, I do feel that I presented the children with good provocations that sparked their curiosity to investigate and discover. However, I do feel that I should have spent more time with the children when we were creating our “bird shop” but due to other commitments, I was not in a position to do so.