

Hello wonderful Little Sprouts' families,

December is upon us, and the animals are busy nestling down for the start of winter. You may also have noticed your family beginning to cozy up as the weather becomes chillier. With this in mind, we will be focusing our time together on how the forest animals spend their winter with an emphasis on hibernation. We will also be exploring the feelings of giving and receiving as we prepare for the upcoming holidays and the many gifts to be shared.

With many of our friends traveling for the holidays, we will be taking the week of December 24th through the 30th off. For the following week, some of our friends' older siblings will be out on school break. They are more than welcome to come and join us as helpers and to model group behavior. If they are still working in these skills, as my older two are, we are happy to be a place for them to practice and learn alongside their siblings. The more the merrier!

The feeling focus of giving and receiving will be explored through the use of gift giving and expressing thanks. Our kiddos will wrap a "gift" in a box and practice handing it to a friend. When they receive the box, they can pick a way to express their gratitude. There are many ways this can be done, such as a hug, smile, or saying/signing "thank you." I look forward to seeing the other ways our kids come up with to express their feelings.

To stretch our big muscles, we will use the action poem, "Teddy bear, teddy bear." We will discuss how many animals, and humans alike, like to stretch before bed. We will act out the poem as we stretch like bears getting ready for our long hibernation. This will guide our kids understanding of their own bodies, motor planning, sequencing, following a group plan, and impulse control.

The gift the kids will be giving each other will be a small stuffed animal and a blanket. We will use these while singing our seasonal song "Lula lula bye," while we sing the animals to sleep for the long hibernation ahead. Through the gentle act of rocking them while singing, we will build their understanding of how to nurture and soothe others as well as themselves. They will also be participating in a group plan and building empathy.

Our fine motor crafts will be making hibernation dens and fairy mobiles to help our forest friends with their long winter sleeps. These crafts will strengthen our kids' skills at following simple directions, focus, motor planning, following the group plan, impulse control, and sharing materials. It will also build empathy for animals as we take a moment to focus on the needs of others.

For cooking this month, Tessa will be teaching us about melatonin as we make moon shaped biscuits and moon milk. Our kids will have the opportunity to practice turn taking as they explore textures visually and tactilely as they mix the ingredients and shape them into moons. It will encourage turn taking, impulse control, completion of a task, and following simple directions. And as an added bonus, hopefully they'll nap on the way home. Thanks Tessa!

Below you will find the links and words to the wonderful songs and verses for this month. Please feel free to sing and practice these with your kiddos ahead of time and all month long. This preview and practice will help to ease the anxiety and stress that new experiences and changes can bring. Which in turn, allows your child the calm needed to learn and grow.

May your December be a restful one.

Warmest regards,

Emily

Listening Song

The Listening Song– Lindsay Munroe

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q1gUfnWJJCQ>

Eyes are watching

Ears are Listening

Voices quiet

Bodies calm

This is how we listen X2

At group time X2

Seasonal Verse/Song-

Lula Lula Bye- Lorraine Nelson Wolf

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9zF06Fp4h7s>

Lula lula bye, my baby close thine eye

With bells and flutes and lyres a ringing

Angels fill the sky with singing

Lula lula bye, my baby close thine eye

Action Poem/Song

Teddy bear, teddy bear

Teddy bear, teddy bear, turn around,
Teddy bear, teddy bear, touch the ground,
Teddy bear, teddy bear, reach up high,
Teddy bear, teddy bear, touch the sky,
Teddy bear, teddy bear, bend down low,
Teddy bear, teddy bear, touch your toes,
Teddy bear, teddy bear, go to bed,
Teddy bear, teddy bear, rest your head,
Teddy bear, teddy bear, turn out the lights,
Teddy bear, teddy bear, say "good night".

Mealtime Verse-

Thank you for our happy hearts
For rain and sunny weather
Thank you farmers for this food
And that we are together

Clean up song- skip forward to 3:00

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vXPTN-lw46I>

Welcome Songs

Good Morning Dear Earth

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sfSmzx0LG8M>

