



News Story – Caterpillars to Butterfly Cycle

Toddlers

Caterpillars:

Last month, a visitor kindly brought in caterpillars for the children to observe as they grow. Our focus story has been *The Very Hungry Caterpillar*, helping the toddlers develop an understanding of the caterpillar life cycle and the different stages they go through, from an egg to a caterpillar, to a cocoon, and finally a butterfly. The children have really enjoyed watching the caterpillars grow, and we have been monitoring them each day, counting how many have hatched and noticing the changes as they develop.



To build on their interest, we explored a range of caterpillar-themed activities. The toddlers used playdough and tools to create their own caterpillars, supporting their fine motor and malleable skills. The children made their own caterpillars by threading leaves onto spaghetti to form the body, which further strengthened their fine motor skills. Another activity involved placing coloured pompoms onto a caterpillar outline, encouraging the children to recognise and name different colours as they filled in the caterpillar's body.





Cocoons:

The children were fascinated watching the caterpillars crawl to the top of the pot, and they were very curious about why the caterpillars were wiggling. Apa linked this back to *The Very Hungry Caterpillar* and explained that the caterpillars had now reached the cocoon stage of their life cycle. We talked to the



children about the special organ caterpillars have near their mouths, called a spinneret, which releases liquid silk. The children learned that the caterpillars wrap this silk around themselves, and as soon as it touches the air, it hardens to form their cocoons.



Chrysalis:

The toddlers were excited to watch Apa carefully transfer the cocoons from the pot into the chrysalis station. They observed as she cleaned away the silk webs and prepared the new space, ensuring the cocoons had the right environment to continue their transformation into butterflies.

Butterflies:

The toddlers were delighted to watch the butterflies emerge from their cocoons and transform into beautiful butterflies. They were fascinated as the butterflies stretched and developed their wings, and they loved observing them flutter around inside the butterfly tent. The children were especially excited when it was time to release them and enjoyed watching the butterflies fly away.





Pre-school

Last term, our little learners became real-life scientists as we explored the magical life cycle of caterpillars! We started our journey by watching educational videos and sharing our ideas about how caterpillars transform into butterflies.



The excitement truly began when our very own live caterpillars arrived in the classroom. The children loved checking on them every day, eagerly watching them grow bigger and bigger. After a few days of enthusiastic eating, the caterpillars spun themselves into delicate cocoons. The children did a wonderful job of being incredibly quiet and careful around them during this fragile stage.

We waited patiently for the cocoons to harden before carefully moving them into their special habitat. Right on cue during the half-term holiday, four beautiful butterflies emerged!



When we returned, the children were delighted to watch them flutter around inside their safety net. We made sure to feed our new friends before gathering together to release them out into nature. It was a wonderful, hands-on learning experience that the children will always remember.