

Stepping Stones Pre-School

Welcome back...

We hope you all enjoyed a lovely half term break, it's lovely having the children back with us!

Staff news...

It is with sadness that I let you know that Steph will be leaving us at the end of the Spring Term. Steph is such an asset to the team- we will be really sad to see her go, but she has now moved to a new family home out of the area-so we wish her all the very best in her new venture. My University course is going well and I am about to start my placements with different age groups, between now and the Summer Term, so you will see slightly less of me than usual in the coming weeks. I am doing a placement working with babies at Advantage Day Nursery, and am off to Limetree to do a placement in Key Stage One. Rather excitingly I am also going to Sweden with the University to look at childcare settings out there- at the moment we plan to visit a 'night' nursery (as they have longer hours of day light), a forest school (eating, sleeping, cooking all outside!), and a comparative nursery setting to here in the UK. I'm really excited to see what other good practice is happening in the borough & in Sweden, & using this to support the staff & families of Stepping Stones to continue to move our practice forward. I will certainly be sharing my findings with you upon my return! Dates I am out of Stepping Stones during the Spring Term: 2-6th March & 16th-20th March. In my absence Tracey will be here covering me, and Charis will be running the sessions-so please see her with any queries.



Supporting children's literacy skills...

Recently a parent asked me how what we do at Stepping Stones supports children's learning into school. As well as the other sections of the curriculum, children's literacy skills are supported in many ways at Stepping Stones, we would love to have parents directly involved in the day to day learning that happens, and enhance the children's experiences at the same time. We would like to do this by going out into the community, so we are inviting parents to join us on 'Listening Walks': What happens on a listening walk? A few children are taken on a short walk around the local area, we talk about what makes a good listener; e.g. keep quiet and have our eyes and ears ready! We also talk about why it's important to listen, e.g. listen out for danger. On our walk children will cup their ears to listen and talk about the different sounds they hear. After we get back, we talk about what we heard and try to remember.



By encouraging children to be active listeners who can tell the difference between sounds in the environment, this will help them in the future to differentiate from sounds when learning to read and write. For example a 'p' and 'b', sound very similar and telling the difference between sounds can be a tricky skill to master, on our listening walk we will try to hear the difference between, say an 'airplane' and a 'helicopter', by gaining these skills at an early age children will be capable and confident when they move onto reading and writing at school. These listening walks will happen on an as & when basis, so if you would like to come and help take a group of children out and about, please let Sarah or Charis know. Similarly if you would prefer that your child isn't taken out of the setting please let us know.

This newsletter's focus on 'child development at home' section is all about how we can support your children's learning through to school- so read on for more info ☺.

Thank you/reminders & requests

Tissues...

Please remember to bring in some boxes of tissues for us ☺



Snack...

Thank you for keeping our snack bowl topped up with fruit, vegetables and breadsticks. We would like snack time to be as healthy as possible for the children, so we are asking that flavoured corn snacks and yoghurt covered raisins etc are kept for your child's enjoyment at home. There are surprising amounts of salt and sugar in snacks aimed at children, this website has some useful tips to make healthy sugar and salt swaps for your children's snacks: <http://www.nhs.uk/Change4Life/Pages/change-for-life.aspx>



Drop off time...

AM Session-please ensure you arrive by 9.10am at the **latest**. This is to ensure that the session is not disrupted. Thank you.

Dates for your diary...

Coffee morning...

Our Spring Term Coffee morning will be on Friday 27th March at Surbiton Children's Centre from 8.45am.

Parent Consultations...

Parent consultations are a 1:1 session where you can discuss your child's progress more in depth. These will take place week commencing 9th March. Please see signup sheets in the annexe.



World book day...

Come & celebrate World Book Day on Tuesday 10th March with us by dressing as your favourite book character & listening to a story with a story teller we have asked to come in for the morning. Parents and non-Tuesday children to arrive 1t 11am. You can buy some books from the Regency Book Shop too!

Speech & language workshop...

We are hosting a workshop on how to support children's speech and language. Thursday 12th March at 7.30pm, please see the attached leaflet for further details.



Special Person week...

We recognise Mother's Day by having a Special Person day. Anyone who is special to your child is invited in to come for a play or to read a story to the group. Any time or session, week commencing 16th March, please let a member of staff know if someone will be coming to join us, and if you would like to read a group story please let us know in advance so that we can organize time and space.

Easter Egg Hunt...

Friday 27th March... more details to follow.

A focus on child development at home... How Stepping Stones supports your children's learning through to school...

Did you know...?

We are continually observing your children's learning and interests.

The staff team meet every week to collate observations and plan for children individually according to their age & stage.

How can you help?: You can help us by telling us what you have observed at home, write your wow moments on our **WOW board** (in our annexe) and we will use your observations to feed into your children's next steps.



How does the daily routine support my child's learning?...



***Self registration:** (helps children learn a sense of belonging to 'school' boosting their self esteem, and therefore desire to learn),

***Hello time:** (children say hello to their teachers and their friends, and get told what they will be learning today, so children understand the purpose of activities/experiences on offer and access them with purpose and understanding),

***Snack time:** (social eating, where lots of learning takes place: counting children, cutting fruit in half, learning who brought what and what favourite things we have ☺, independence is fostered to help children for when they will eat independently at school, children put their own cup and plate in the washing up bowl and help to wash up, making them responsible for their own things and making a positive contribution to their school),

***Child led play:** (being able to play with another child or alongside another child helps children to learn social skills and gives them the opportunity to test out their ideas without an adult always being present, independent learning supports a school class environment e.g. getting used to having 1 teacher rather than lots!)

***Teacher Led:** an indoor and an outdoor activity each day led by a teacher (helps children to learn that an adult can further their learning, helps children to see their teacher as a partner in their learning and not only a 'care giver'), 'special time' (small focussed group learning, to help with social skills, idea building, a chance to learn in a quieter environment, and build confidence to speak in a large group).



As you have read-we have created our routine to support your children in their current learning, & through their school life. I hope this has been useful, let me or your child's key person know if you'd like further information on how we can support your child's learning now & into the future.

What we're learning at Stepping Stones...

Personal, Social and Emotional development	Communication & Language
We have been learning the new tidy up routine to the 'Bare Necessities' song.	We have been talking about places and journeys going on a train ride-recently we've been to Sardinia and shopping in Kingston 😊.
 Sing a tidy up song when tidying up at home!	 Take the bus or the train, and bring a photo into show us!
Physical development	Literacy
We have been using our pincer grip to put rice into small containers to help with our writing skills.	Children have taken part in 'special time' with their key person to read stories in small groups to build confidence.
 Use knives, forks & spoons at mealtimes, instead of finger foods.	 Read stories together in a group, with mummy, daddy, sisters, brothers etc,
Mathematics	Understanding the world
Learning about capacity by filling and emptying containers.	We have been buying tickets to board the train- so that children understand the concept of how the world works.
 Take cups and jugs or play tea sets in the bath so that children can spill water over the edge and less cleaning up for you!	 Let children pay for items in shops, or talk to the staff at the library when taking a book out.
Expressive Arts and Design	 = Ideas for learning you can extend at home
We have been building with junk modelling- we have made Chitty chitty bang bang and a giraffe recently!	
 Make a yogurt pot monster or use a box of tissues to make a post box!	

Best wishes, Sarah & the Stepping Stones Team