



## Stepping Stones Pre-School

### Welcome...

Happy New Year to you all, I hope you all enjoyed a restful Christmas Holiday. We have an action packed Spring Term ahead of us- so please pay particular attention to the dates for diaries section in the newsletter. Welcome to all of our new families-and welcome back to our existing families- everyone has settled back into Pre-School life well.

### Cake Sale...

Thank you to all of you who helped bake cakes and bought some yummy treats- what a talented & generous group of children and parents we have at Stepping Stones. We raised a superb £64.45 which we have put towards purchasing some buggies for outdoor play- they have been a great hit with the children as they role play taking dollies to Pre-School-just like their mum's and dad's. You can take a look at the photo's from our cake sale on our Facebook page:

<http://www.facebook.com/steppingstonesurbiton>

### Surbiton Children's Centre...

We are very fortunate to be so close to our local Children's Centre and we are working together more closely this year by taking groups of children over to take part in cooking sessions. 2 members of the Stepping Stones team will take a small group of children over to the centre who will work with Teresa, Louise and Charlotte (the super Surbiton Children's Centre team) to cook some delicious recipes. We will try to make sure everybody has a chance to join in with a session over the course of the next 2 terms. Our next visit will be on Wednesday 20th January, and we will visit again on Wednesday 2nd March. If you would prefer that your child stays at Stepping Stones and not go to the children's centre, please let Sarah or Charis know.

### Staff update...

We have a new member of staff come to join us: Emma Calligan. Emma is undertaking an Advanced Level Apprenticeship for the Children and Young People's Workforce (Early Years Educator) Level 3. Emma will be at Stepping Stones Tuesday, Wednesday & Friday's AM & PM sessions. Please help us to make her feel welcome.

### Coffee morning...

After our last coffee morning, we sent out a questionnaire to gather parents views, as we really want this to be a parents session. The feedback was very good & parents said that they really enjoyed the coffee morning. The ideas for improvements were: Give out name stickers to parents, provide some healthier snacks- (perhaps parents could provide this). Also, upon your suggestion, we are going to aim to send different staff members to the coffee mornings so that you can get to know the staff a little better. This will of course depend on the Key Person and their needs of their Key Children, as we don't want to impact children's experiences in the session. Charis will be at our next coffee morning along with Tracey. We asked parents what they thought might encourage others to come along, and really good coffee was suggested so we will now offer cafetiere coffee. Parents also suggested a different time for the coffee morning might encourage others to come along, so we will be doing a time poll at the gate to see what fits best. We will make these changes for our next coffee morning, thanks for the feedback. 83% of parents said that the coffee morning was relaxed and 83% said it was a good way to meet other parents, so if you are interested and would like to come along to our next Coffee Morning (and bring some healthy snacks too!), we would love to see you there.

## Thank you/reminders & requests

### Birthday's...

We love to celebrate children's birthdays at Stepping Stones! Some parents have donated a book to the Stepping Stones Library in the past to celebrate their child's birthday, which is a lovely a 'tooth-friendly' option. Don't forget we hold a book wish list at the Regency Bookshop in Surbiton, and an Amazon wish list too! However, if you would like to bring in some treats (cakes are preferred to sweets), please let a staff member know. Staff will ensure that cakes are handed to parents rather than children- as we don't want to conflict with meal times ☺.

### 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...

### Induction evening...

As we have new families joining us we are holding a Spring Term induction evening. This will be held on **Thursday 28th January at 7.30pm**. The evening is for new and existing families, we talk about why we do what we do at Stepping Stones, what you can expect from your child's time with us and get to know other parents and catch up with the staff team. The evening lasts approximately 1 hour, please note we require a minimum of 6 parents attending for the evening to go ahead. Please email me to inform me of your attendance, or let one of the team know.

### Half Term...

Monday 15<sup>th</sup> February-Friday 19<sup>th</sup> February.

### Inset Day...

We are closed for an inset day **Friday 29th January & Monday 22nd February (AM sessions only)**.

### Coffee morning...

Our Spring Term Coffee morning will be on **Friday 5th February** at Surbiton Children's Centre time TBC. If Friday is not your usual session, please do come along, there is plenty of space for children to play whilst you enjoy a well earned cuppa!

### 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 1st February**. Please see sign-up sheets closer to the time.

### Workshop...

Although the workshop isn't until after half term, I want to give you plenty of notice that we are holding a workshop on Behaviour Management(including potty training) on **Thursday 17th March at 7.30pm**. Please note this is a change to the advertised 'Speaking and Listening Skills' workshop due to parent requests for a workshop on this topic. The Speaking and Listening workshop will go ahead in the Summer Term (unless you have ideas for any other workshops?-please let me know what would be useful).

## A focus on child development at home... Literacy

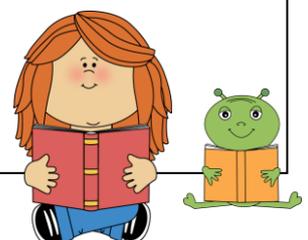
Reading with your child has SO many benefits. It supports children with making attachments, helps them understand sequencing (beginning, middle and end) and it helps foster their imaginative skills. Children can greatly improve their concentration and language skills through reading, and in these early stages of literacy development developing a love of reading and the knowledge that it's fun will really support your children when they move into school.

You may well have heard of bookstart, but you may not know that they have an amazing fully interactive website: <http://www.bookstart.org.uk/>

'The Boy in the Bus', 'Owl Babies' and 'Some dogs do' can be shared and read from a smartphone or tablet.

'Lulu loves Stories' can be read, and listened to on the website in a number of languages: [http://www.bookstart.org.uk/have-some-fun/#/static/bookstart/fun-stuff/activities/lulu\\_loves\\_stories/](http://www.bookstart.org.uk/have-some-fun/#/static/bookstart/fun-stuff/activities/lulu_loves_stories/)

So take a look and get reading!



## What we're learning at Stepping Stones...

Personal, Social and Emotional development	Communication & Language
<p>We have been playing parachute games and learning to play cooperatively with our friends.</p> <p> Play a board game together at home.</p>	<p>We have been baking (making Christmas cakes) and encouraging children to use language to connect with others and share what they know.</p> <p>Baking at home together and talk about what children made at Stepping Stones. </p>
Physical development	Literacy
<p>Children have been gaining control over using one handed tools and equipment by playing with tools in our workshop.</p> <p> Encourage children to use one handed tools like taking the top on and off a bottle in the bath.</p>	<p>Children have been learning about writing by having familiar print in our home corner, the 'Pizza Express' box or 'Weetabix'.</p> <p>Name the items you regularly use at home to support children's understanding of writing. </p>
Mathematics	Understanding the world
<p>We have been attempting different puzzles to encourage children to challenge themselves and go onto the next level.</p> <p> Count puzzle pieces with your child to demonstrate that a puzzle with lots of pieces is tricky!</p>	<p>We have been playing with the dolls house- talking about our own homes and who lives there.</p> <p>Play with little people at home giving names to the characters from your family. </p>
Expressive Arts and Design	 = Ideas for learning you can extend at home
<p>Children have been using the role play area to re-live home experiences, cooking, making tea etc.</p> <p> Let your child help you make lunch or tea-or do the washing up with you!</p>	

*Best wishes,  
Sarah & the Stepping Stones Team*