

Stepping Stones Pre-School

Welcome...

Welcome to all of our new families- the children have settled in so well! The children are enjoying getting to know their new friends & everyone has settled back into Pre-School life well. Apologies my newsletter is a little later into the term than usual, we have been squirreling away organizing the launch of our lunch club. We still have some lunch club spaces available, and they are on a first come, first served basis, so don't hesitate to get in touch if you are considering signing your child up for a space.

Staff News...

After a long round of recruitment we have finally recruited 2 members of staff, Debra Richardson & Nicola Hodgson. Debra & Nicola are both very experienced practitioners, and have joined us from St Matthew's Pre-School, who sadly closed last Summer. In the meantime, they have both kept up their early years experience working at a setting within the borough. Please help us to make them feel welcome!



Reminders: With lots of new families to welcome the staff team have asked that these reminders are in this half term's newsletter:

Parking...



I put a note about parking in the last newsletter, but there is still an issue and I have now received further complaints from the local residents, so please can I ask that all parents pay particular attention to this section of the newsletter:

We are well aware that the parking within the locality of the Pre-School is very difficult, so we do try to encourage parents to walk whenever possible. As we are part of the local community here on the Alpha Estate, I'm sure that you can appreciate it's really important that we work together with the residents for the benefit of the pre-school and the people living here. As well as wanting to maintain a good relationship with the residents, we also have to ensure that the children's safety is paramount.

There have been occasions where the pavement has been blocked by parking, meaning that children have to walk in the road, which is particularly busy at pick up times, and therefore even more dangerous for children. In addition, parking for Alum Court is reserved for residents only, so you are not able to park in the bays that are reserved for Alum Court residents, and parents are not allowed to park in Surbiton Children's Centre Nursery car park. There are several free roads that you can park on within a 5 minute walk of Stepping Stones that you may not be aware of:

- King Charles Road
- Browns Road
- Christ Church Road
- The Avenue
- Avenue South
- Smith Street
- Alexandra Drive
- Berrylands

And a little closer but may be congested with Surbiton Children's Centre Nursery traffic:

- Alpha Road
- Britannia Road

Whilst we know that these are not in the immediate vicinity and they won't be a convenient option for everybody, we are asking those of you who can to support us to ensure the safety of all the children, and to support us to have a good working relationship with the local residents of the Alpha Estate.

Tissues...



If you are not yet aware, we ask for parents to donate packets and boxes of tissues (due to our charity status). As the sniffles increase, we are running low on tissues! Please could you bring some in to try and help keep the germs at bay.

Wellies & spare clothes...



With all the wet weather we've been having, please make sure that you bring named wellies for your child that fit their feet properly. We do lots of running around (to burn off all that energy!), and when wellies are too big, the boots fall off and interrupt children's play and learning. If it is raining and you need to bring your child in their wellington boots, please also bring your child a named pair of shoes that they can change into, as we are finding that children's feet are cold when they wear wellingtons for the whole session. Please ensure that you supply your child with a full set of spare clothes, more often than not it's a full change that we need to do! Please label all of your child's belongings, we have lots of lost property at the moment, and as our sessions are full, we really need every available peg for the children to hang their belongings. Thanks so much for your cooperation, it really helps us!

Wipes...

Please supply your child with a packet of wipes in their bag if they are still wearing nappies.

Self registering system...

Please allow your child to look for their name and bring their self registration card into the classroom. The system is designed to support children's self confidence and awareness, and also build their sense of independence and help with a familiar drop off routine.

Contributions...

As many of you access the pre-school free of charge due to government funding, we have placed a collection box in the annexe for anyone who would like to contribute to childcare costs. The suggested donation is 50p per week. Unfortunately the government funding does not cover the cost of sessions, so any contributions will be gratefully received.



Things from home box...

In the annexe we have a 'Things from home box', (it has a star on the laminated label) we set this box up at the request of our parents. Parents tell us that often children need to bring an object from home, to the pre-school to help with the transition. So that special things then don't make their way into the classroom (where they may get lost, broken, or children find this object particularly difficult to share as it's not a shared pre-school toy), you can use this box to support you with this transition.

Dates for your diary...

Half Term...

Monday 13th February-Friday 17th February.

Inset Day...

We are closed for an inset day Thursday 9th February for the AM session.

Behaviour Management workshop...

Would you like to know more about ...

- How we learn behaviour?
- Understanding challenging behaviour?
- What is appropriate/inappropriate behaviour?
- Strategies to support behaviour management?



If so... We are hosting a workshop on Behaviour Management on Wednesday 1st March at 7.30pm, to help you support your child's personal, social and emotional development. Please return the slip to confirm your attendance at our workshop. If you would like workshops run on any other topics, then please send me an email, and I would be very happy to create one based on your needs. Please note that we require a minimum of 6 parents to run a workshop. Please take this opportunity to have an evening away from your children to learn about their development, this workshop is for adults only.

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 6th March. Please see sign up sheets closer to the time.

A focus on child development at home... Taking care of our world

With all the extreme weather we've been experiencing it's a good time to think about the environment and taking care of animals who may have lost their homes or who are having trouble finding food, and a great way to develop your child's understanding of how to take care of our world....



Hedgehogs

It's really easy to make a house for hedgehogs. Take a sturdy crate and turn it upside down. Cover it with stones, earth and wood, and make sure there's an entrance. If it's dry and protected, hedgehogs can use it to stay over winter.

- Hibernating hedgehogs like peace and quiet. Put the house where it won't be disturbed, against a wall, bank or fence if possible and under or near plant cover.
- Hedgehogs like to furnish their own homes with leaves and garden debris - it's part of their hibernation ritual - so don't line the box for them.
- Don't disturb the box once it's occupied. You might frighten a nesting mother and cause the young to be abandoned.
- If you can, put your hedgehog home in or near a damp, untidy area so that hedgehogs are protected when they come out to forage.

Birds:

Put some seeds on your window sill or in your garden.



A small pool of water for a drink or a bath.

Here's a link for more ideas:

http://www.bbc.co.uk/gardening/gardening_with_children/homegrownprojects_bird.shtml

Ducks:

With the poor weather not as many people go & feed the ducks. Spare a thought for our feathery friends & pop into the fishponds on your walk home. We are advised not to give ducks bread anymore... the latest advice is frozen peas. Clean eating really is all the rage!!



What we're learning at Stepping Stones...

Personal, Social and Emotional development	Communication & Language
<p>We have been playing group games, such as ring-a-ring-a-roses & the hokey cokey to encourage playing together.</p> <p> Play group games together at home.</p>	<p>We have been focussing encouraging the children to develop conversation skills in small groups.</p> <p>Make sure that when you talk to your child you get down to their level, and if you ask them a question... wait for the response, always allow up to 10 seconds waiting time!!</p> <p style="text-align: right;"></p>
Physical development	Literacy
<p>We have been working on strengthening children's finger and hand muscles for their writing skills using play dough, and scissors.</p> <p> Encourage children to help with dressing themselves, zipping up jackets & Velcro-ing their shoes to strengthen finger muscles.</p>	<p>We have introduced the children to different mark making resources, and the letters of the alphabet. Children are beginning to write their names.</p> <p>Learn your phonetic alphabet to support children with early reading skills and helping them sound out words they are trying to write.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"></p>
Mathematics	Understanding the world
<p>Children have been learning about 'positional language', we have been hunting for treasure looking 'underneath', 'on top', 'next to', 'behind'.</p> <p> What can you hide at home and tak part in 'mini treasure hunts'?!</p>	<p>With the icy weather we have had, we have been learning about water and how it can change. Leaving water out overnight and then waiting to see what would happen the next day!</p> <p> Explore your garden and find items to freeze in water, leave it outside on a frosty night, see what happens the next day!</p>
Expressive Arts and Design	<p> = Ideas for learning you can extend at home</p>
<p>Children have the opportunity to role play in the 'shop'.</p> <p> Talk to the children about the language the shop keepers use, for example, "is that everything today?" "did you find everything you need?"</p>	

*Best wishes,
Sarah & the Stepping Stones Team*