

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...

Due to an increase in numbers, Vanessa Barnicoat has joined our team. Vanessa's children came to Stepping Stones, so she is familiar with what it is like to be a parent here. Vanessa undertaking her induction and training into the role of pre-school assistant with us. Please help us to make Vanessa feel welcome!!

A note from the committee...

Following your letters of support regarding the notice served to Stepping Stones, the local press have taken an interest in us needing to find a new home. On Tuesday 14th March at 11.15am, the Surrey Comet are sending a photographer, (Ben) to Stepping Stones to take photographs to put in the local paper to raise the profile of the situation. Many of you have been asking how you can help us... this is your chance! If you and your child would like to be involved in having photographs taken for the newspaper, please come down at 11.15am to pledge your support. Some parents have suggested making banners and posters along the theme of: 'Help find us a new home', 'Save Stepping Stones', 'Keep Stepping Stones Open'. Those who have emailed Kevin Davis, may have had the response that the Local Authority are supporting us in finding a new premises, on the list of the 30+ premises we have enquired about, the Local Authority have suggested only one, so we would love to encourage more support from the Local Authority, and we are hopeful that the press release may do this. We are happy to supply large coloured paper if you would like to make a poster/banner with your child, this will be available from tomorrow, Thursday 9th March, in the annexe. The photographer may like to take photos of the children playing in our environment, should you wish that your child is not included in photos that may be put in the paper, please let us know before Tuesday 14th March.



Thank you/reminders & requests...

Workshop...

Thank you to those of you who attended our Behaviour Management Workshop, which is usually a popular topic with parents of pre-schoolers! We really enjoyed reflecting and sharing with you all. We are looking forward to hearing if the strategies we suggested have been helpful, I will be sending out a feedback form soon! Thought our workshop was useful? Let other parents know! Our next workshop will be on Early Reading and Writing Skills on **Wednesday 26th April**, but I am always open to ideas for new workshops and happy to create something bespoke/different depending on families needs and interests... Let me know if you have any ideas: sarah@steppingstonessurbiton.org.uk



Some of you asked if we might repeat the workshop...? If there is interest from parents we would consider repeating the workshop, but, please be aware that workshop dates are sent out a year in advance to allow parents ample time to decide if they would like to come along and make the necessary arrangements. Stepping Stones is a charity, and the workshops are offered as 'free' support. When the children are not in attendance we have no income coming in to cover the cost of such events. Offering services such as workshops, is unique to Stepping Stones, so we would encourage parents to make the most of our expertise. Sarah is an Early Years Teacher, and holds a postgraduate certificate in Early Years, as well as working here she lectures on the Foundation Degree Programme for Kingston University. Not to mention the collective 40 years + experience of the entire staff team, with most of the team holding a Level 3 in early years and childcare, NNEB's and regular early years training that we all attend to stay up-to-date with current and best practice. The workshops were implemented as we wanted to give parents the opportunity to share in our expertise, and offer bespoke support. We would encourage you to make the most of these opportunities when they arise.

Spare clothes...

Even if your child is potty trained, please ensure that you pack an entire change of spare clothes.



Please also ensure that you **return** our spare clothes. We have had some beautiful clothes donated to add to our spare clothes collection, (the Frozen leggings have gone down particularly well!) but they haven't been returned, and we currently have no girls spare bottoms. Please return them as a matter of urgency.

Dates for your diary...

World Book Day...

Don't forget we are celebrating World Book day with by dressing up tomorrow and having a 'bookathon', please feel free to bring along a story to share.



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, read a story to the group or play with the chicks. Any time or session, week commencing 27th 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 organise time and space.

Easter Egg Hunt...

We are holding an Easter Egg hunt for the children on the last day of term. We would love to see you all there to join in with the fun! The session times will run as usual so please don't worry if you can't make it. All the details are below... let us know if you have any further questions.

Everyone is invited (siblings/other children you look after) whether Friday is your usual day or not! We would love for all parents to attend if possible, so if you can make it, please meet us at 10.45am at Fishponds, if Friday is not your usual day.

If Friday is your child's usual day & you are unable to attend with your child, please let the member of staff (manned with a clipboard) on the gate at drop off and collection know so that we can assign children to groups with a designated adult. If you are planning on attending with your child please arrive, at 10.25am, promptly. If you are not going to attend, you can then drop your child off as usual at Stepping Stones. We will be back at Stepping Stones for you to collect your child at the normal time.

The important information:

* What?: **Easter Egg Hunt**

*When?: **Friday 31st March**

*Who?: **Hope to see you all there (if you are bringing 'extra' children, let us know so we can make sure we have enough eggs)**

*Where & what time?: **Fishponds Park (small fenced enclosure). Time: 10.45am**

*What?: **The great Easter Egg Hunt!** Egg Tokens will be hidden around The Fishponds enclosed area for children to find. Some high, some low, some easy to find, some harder! When the children find a token they bring it to one of the Easter bunnies (Stepping Stones staff and committee members!) and they will be given a sticker to add to their Easter crown. Once they have collected stickers on their crown, they can come and collect their prize egg from the Easter Bunnies.

Members of the Stepping Stones committee usually kindly make the children Easter crowns to wear (an essential part of the Easter Egg Hunt!) but as you are aware, they are currently very busy with the premises search. Therefore, we are asking for parents to volunteer to make the crowns (a prototype and materials are all available from Stepping Stones, from Tuesday 14th March).

Weather permitting, we will also be reading an Easter story before the hunt to get the children in the mood.

Unless the weather is absolutely terrible, we won't let it spoil our Easter fun, so do come prepared with wet weather clothes and wellies or hats and gloves!



A focus on child development at home...

Would you like to know more about how your child is developing and what you can do to help at home? The Government have produced this fantastic guide: 'What to expect and when'. The link to the document is here:

http://www.foundationyears.org.uk/files/2015/09/4Children_ParentsGuide_Sept_2015v4WEB1.pdf

As we observe your children and plan for their next steps in learning, these are the kind of behaviours and activities we are looking for from children. You can really help us move your children's learning forward by using our 'WOW' board, as I'm sure you have seen children can behave very differently at home than they do at pre-school! So please help yourself to a post it and let us know what has made you say WOW. We then take a copy of your observations and include them with our own to use when we plan next steps, to make it as accurate and as personal to your child as we can. If you would like to borrow a hard copy of the document, please let us know.



What we're learning at Stepping Stones...

Personal, Social and Emotional development	Communication & Language
<p>We have been learning to listen to others in small groups, holding an object when it is their turn to talk reminds everyone who's turn it is. Children have been asking questions to find out new information from others.</p> <p>In conversations with children allow them time to talk and allow them time to listen to you</p>	<p>We have been learning how to use our words to help us in our play, talking about what we would like or need, using words to resolve conflicts.</p> <p>When talking to your children remember to model the way we speak to others and support your child through conversations with others, providing language that is needed</p>
Physical development	Literacy
<p>We have been using our bodies in a variety of ways using story books like the Animal Boogie to help us, swinging our arms, stomping our feet and many more ways.</p> <p>Be adventurous when out on walks and give your child ideas of how to move i.e jumping like a kangaroo!!</p>	<p>We have been really interested in stories and using story sacks to help us tell stories, children are becoming particularly interested in traditional tales.</p> <p>Start to share traditional stories with your children talking about the beginning, middle and end so they begin to understand the structure of a story.</p>
Mathematics	Understanding the world
<p>We have been learning all about the basic shapes. Circle, square, rectangle and triangle. The children have done this by having shape hunts outside.</p> <p>Notice the shapes in your environment for example 'the clock is a circle shape'.</p>	<p>The children have shown a key interest in Dinosaurs, so we have set up dinosaur investigation areas for the children to learn about them, particularly learning the names of them.</p> <p>Read Dinosaur books with your children and let them share their new found knowledge with you.</p>
Expressive Arts and Design	= Ideas for learning you can extend at home
<p>We have had a variety of shop role play, the children learning different ways to play, someone is the shop keeper and someone is the customer.</p> <p>Play shops at home and allow children to pretend play with you, giving them language to use, "what would like today?".</p>	