

Playgroup News

Staffing

As some of you may know we have been advertising for Deputy for the St John's Oakmere setting. Miss Whitty, who joined Baker Street in September 2008, was one of the applicants for the position and was offered the role. Sarah Whitty will shortly be completing her BA degree course and felt this was an opportunity for her to advance her career. We are very pleased that she has decided to stay with St John's although we shall miss her at Baker Street. Her key children will be allocated a new keyworker. This may be one of our current keyworkers, or a new staff member.

We are currently advertising for a 'Senior Keyworker' to replace Miss Whitty. We are looking for someone with at least a relevant NVQ level 3 qualification who has 2 years+ experience if possible. If you know of anyone who is looking this type of position, please let us know.

Further staffing news: Mrs Cooke will shortly complete her NVQ level 2 and after Easter she will start NVQ 3. This will benefit St John's and the children so we wish her 'happy studies'. Mrs Mills has also returned to her studies after an 18 month 'break' from formal study. She has started her BA with University of Northampton (studying in Watford!), this will be followed by 'Early Years Professional Status' after the summer holidays. Mrs Mills will therefore not be available on Fridays in the foreseeable future. Karen Murphy (leader of St John's Oakmere) will also shortly complete her BA(Hons) degree and EYPS studies after a very intensive 3 years of study, which also included taking on leadership of St John's Sunny Bank, then moving everyone to Oakmere. Well Done Mrs Murphy!

Clothing

You may have noticed some of the children wearing our playgroup polo shirts. These are available to purchase from LeeJoys in the High Street, or if you ask Mrs Aylott very nicely she may be able to obtain them for you. £5.50 each or £15 for 3. We have also purchased fleeces for the children to wear on outings (10 so far) which will have the logo embroidered. Staff will also have matching fleeces. Please continue to NAME all clothing!!

Fees and Funding

From April 2009 our funding will change yet again. Hertfordshire are part of a Government pilot scheme which works out the funding in a different format. We have been assured this will not affect parents and should mean more money for the playgroup as a whole, to develop the setting and staff. The paperwork will change again for us, but hopefully the change will be seamless for parents. Forms will be issued in April.

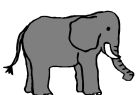
Some parents have been asking about 'nursery vouchers'. We are able to take these but ask you to bring in any relevant paperwork from your employer and we will process.



Extended Hours

Following the basic consultation establishing interest in afternoon sessions, we are now asking for your commitment before we commence with changes. From the initial consultation Tuesday was the most popular, with all other days attracting equal 'votes'. We are therefore looking at Tuesday and Thursday being the most likely days as they are also our busiest. Please indicate on the list on the notice board if you wish book a place. A deposit of £25 will be asked for (refundable if it does not go ahead!) on booking. After the changes which we made to enable us to offer early opening, we want to ensure there is committed interest in afternoon sessions as we will have to make lots of changes to our routine; to our departure procedure and entry for any 'afternoon only' children. Our priority is to keep the children safe at all times and we do not want to disrupt the children's routine unnecessarily. Obviously the lunch club will continue to offered as part of our flexible provision.

We have a few 9am start spaces left, if you are interested please speak with Mrs Mills. The fee per morning is £1.00.



Local Walks, Walkodile

We mentioned earlier in the year that we were hoping to take the children for walks in the local area. All the new parents (from January 2009) have had the opportunity to permit their children to join us. I will be asking all other parents for general written permission for short outings if you wish your child to take part. To ensure that we keep your children as safe as we possibly can, we have purchased 2 'Walkodiles'. These are a way to keep up to 6 (x2) children strapped safely while enabling us to keep them together. These have been used by many playgroups and I have displayed some of the photos from the website. More information can be obtained from www.walkodile.com



'Learning Journeys'

In January this year we implemented lots of changes at St John's. One of these was the way in which we record observations of the children. We have always made observations and noted these on a development grid, deciding on how to best help the individual, unique child to progress. Since January we have started to record these achievements in a 'learning journey' book. Lots of pictures have been taken of the children during this term (over 500 in total!!) as well as the traditional written observations. You are very welcome to view these books and indeed add your own observations to it. We are aware that the children do lots of things at home which we may never be aware of, so to make the books a true reflection of their development, do have a look at it and add your own comments. Remember your child's keyworker is available to discuss progress or concerns. A report will be issued at the end of your child's time with us.

Capital Grant

We have started purchasing items from the Capital Grant and TOPS funds. New soft and colourful rugs, new toys and equipment is appearing weekly. We still have not finalised the plans for the outside area. If you would like to quote for this work we would like to hear from you asap as we would like to commence work before the summer starts. Mrs Mills will explain the areas we are looking to develop and the principles behind outdoor learning for young people—or maybe you have experience in this area and can advise us!! Please!!.



Date Changes

We apologise for all the mistakes on the dates list which we issued earlier this term. We have since made further changes, but hope this will not cause any problems. As we only had sufficient spare spaces at St John's to admit 4 new children once we allocated the extra days, the settling in period is likely to be shorter. We have therefore decided to only have one settling in day which means we can start back on **Wednesday 22nd April**. The current children will be in the Rainbow room and outside, with the new children mostly occupying the upper room while we tell the new parents about all the wonderful things we do together!

SPRING TERM

Last day- Friday 3rd April

SUMMER TERM- PLEASE NOTE CHANGES!!!!

Monday 20th April Playgroup closed *Staff training*

Tues 21st April *New children start*

Wednesday 22nd April *ALL children return* **NOTE CHANGE**

Monday 4th May *Bank Holiday, playgroup closed*

Tuesday 19th May *Photographer: Black & White Photos, more details to follow*

Monday 25th - Friday 29th May *Half term — playgroup closed*

Thursday 4th June—*voting day, playgroup closed*

Sunday 14th June *Potters Bar carnival, all invited—can we take first place again?*

Additional dates to be arranged:

Road Safety Talk for *ALL parents and carers.*

Teddy Bears Picnic, & summer party

Friday 17th July *LAST DAY of TERM—**NOTE CHANGE***

