

# Playgroup News

ST JOHN'S  
NURSERY  
PLAYGROUPS



St John's Methodist Church • Oakmere School

Baker Street Mobile: 07969 924482 email: enquiries@stjohnsbakerstreet.co.uk

October 2012

We would like to welcome all the new families that have joined us this September and welcome back to the families that returned after the summer holidays. We are pleased that most of the new children have settled into the busy and lively routine of the playgroup. It's a busy term on the run up to Christmas with lots of new experiences for the children.

## This Terms Topics

### Summer Holidays



Since returning from our Summer holiday's the children have been involved in different activities about summer from beach pictures using multi textured media; 3D modelling of aeroplanes, cars and trains and talking about their holiday from photos provided by you the parents and carers. If you haven't managed to bring in a photo or memento yet of your child's holiday, it's not too late to do so as we will continue this activity up to half term. This is a very effective activity because even the quietest of children want to talk about their precious memories.

**N**ext half term the theme will be 'Me and my senses'. There will be more about the planned activities closer to the time. We will be looking for musicians, 'smelly' herbs and lots of textured materials. We will also look at autumn and it's golden colours; fireworks, Diwali and of course Christmas. If you have any ideas for activities please speak with your keyworker.

## Marie Currie Daffodil Appeal

**W**e have joined the

Marie Curie 'Mini pots of care' daffodil growing appeal. Every child will plant a daffodil in a pot. These will be named and in February we will have a fundraising day to raise money for this very worthwhile cause; one which sadly affects so many families. We will incorporate this into our topic of senses and children will not only plant them (all resources supplied) but have the chance to care for them here at Playgroup. Mini Pots of Care planting activity is an interactive and creative fundraising activity, which helps children aged 3-11 learn about science, nature and charitable giving while, raising money to fund our Marie Curie Nurses.



## NOTICES



**TISSUES** We are fast approaching the time of year when noses start running and throats start tickling. We would be grateful if every child could bring a box of tissues to help us keep the children's 'noses wiped' as much as possible



**FRUIT SHARING** At St John's we want to promote healthy eating and would ask the children to bring in a piece of fruit once or twice a week to share with the other children, then hopefully there will be enough each day to supplement the other healthy foods which the playgroup provides.

**BIRTHDAY SWEETS** In keeping with our healthy eating policy and due to children's food allergies and cultural dietary needs we are asking for parents to no longer bring in sweets for their children's birthday's. The other consideration is the quantity of sweets which the children have over the year—with 65+ children, that is a lot of packets of sweets to be purchased and consumed.

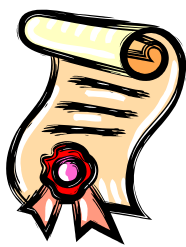
## Via Email...

**I**f you would like to receive the newsletter and any other playgroup notices via email, please let your leader know. Let's save a tree to two! Newsletters are also available on our website! Please do contact us by email if you have any queries, Celia Mills and Alyson Gnessen will get back with answers quickly as they both check their emails regularly. Addresses at the top of the newsletter.



## Students

At St John's we encourage and support students undertaking their early years training. We currently have **Amy Edwards** who is studying at Oaklands College undertaking her NVQ Level 3 in Early years. Amy is with us on Monday and Friday's. **Lydia Balubuliza** who is studying for her Early Years Professional Status will be at Playgroup volunteering for several months learning 'best practice' from our highly skilled staff. She will be sending a letter out introducing herself and explaining more about her work with us. In early September we had two Danish students Charlotte and Christina who were here in England to research the difference between girls and boys play and whether there is a difference in attitude between the countries. They observed and spoke with the children. I have asked for a copy of their work when they finish their research.



## Treasure Chest

At St John's we have a treasure chest which is primarily for children to bring in a comforter of some description - ranging from a cuddly toy, an old muslin or any other object that a child has formed a special bond with that will give them comfort if they wobble during the morning. Please make use of this facility if you think your child will benefit from it. The treasure chest also doubles up as a lost property box so if you are missing something, it may well be in the treasure chest.



## Fees Payments

At the beginning of each term, parents that are required to pay playgroup fees (i.e. Under 3 year olds) are asked to ensure these are paid promptly. If payment falls behind, we will work with you to set up a payment plan. Our policy is you should be no more than 2 weeks behind with fees or your child's space may be at risk. At Baker Street we have a long waiting list of children keen to take up a place so please be diligent and pay on time.



## Parent Helpers

If you have an hour (or more) to spare and your child has settled at playgroup, we would appreciate your help during the morning or afternoon by playing and learning with the children - read a book, paint a picture, come for a walk with the Walkodile, create with play dough or clay, do a jigsaw puzzle or help the children with role play activities, all of which are of real benefit to the children. Or if you have any skills you would like to share with the children (or staff) like singing, musical instruments, gardening or artwork, then please speak with Mrs Mills at Baker Street or your child's keyworker.



## Wet Weather Gear

We are fast approaching the time of year when the weather turns cooler and wetter! As we are committed to promoting outdoor play and many children prefer to play outside whatever the weather we ask you to provide your child with a warm coat, gloves and hats as appropriate. We do provide a limited number of waterproof jackets, trousers and wellies.



## Playgroup Polo-Shirts

St John's Nursery Playgroup polo-shirts are available from Lee Joys. They cost £5.50 for one or £15.00 for three with a 5% commission going to St Johns. If you are interested, please contact Mrs Mash. Why not join together and order 3 to get the saving. We have a few second-hand shirts which you can purchase for a donation of £2.



## Playgroup Stakeholders Meeting

The next Stakeholders meeting will be held on **the 28th November at 7.15 pm for 7.30 start** at St John's Methodist Church. All parents, carers, staff and interested parties from both settings are invited to attend as we would really appreciate your views, ideas and feedback. We will be looking for new parent reps at both settings; if you are interested, please speak to your settings leader. Toys will be available to keep children occupied during the meeting. We aim to keep the meeting short (30-45 minutes).

## Survey Results - HCC

Last term we asked parents, staff and concerned parties, to go onto the Herts County Council web page and cast your vote and contribute comments regarding a consultation relating to a 'one intake' for all school nurseries. This elicited many comments and concerns from parents and setting leaders. The main comments related to young children's readiness for nursery; concerns over how many children were not ready for the 1:15 ratio; social and emotional readiness; physical readiness relating to potty training. The result has been that County will leave it to individual schools to decide how many intakes they feel is right for their schools. In Potters Bar there is a mixture of one and two intake schools, and several will allow you to delay entry if it is in the child's best interest.



## Vitamin D

There has been a lot in the press recently regarding Vitamin D deficiency. Low levels of vitamin D can increase the risk of poor bone health, including rickets in children. This is becoming a serious problem, with many more children affected. Most of a toddler's vitamin D is made in their skin when outside in the sunlight during summer months. The recommendation is to give children a vitamin D supplement daily to ensure they receive sufficient supplies. Please see the poster on the notice board for more information.



## Barnado's Big Toddle

We would like to thank all the families who joined in the Barnados' Big Toddle Sponsored Walk which took place at the Furzefield at the end of July. Just when we thought the picnic was going to be a washout, the sun came and gave us brilliant weather for a picnic. We raised over £230; thank you for your efforts in fundraising for this important event.

## Staff News

At Oakmere, we are very sorry to be losing two key staff from the team, Sarah Whitty who is joining the Pre School Learning Alliance to support playgroups in the Barnet area as a development worker. Debbie Hunt has had a complete career change and Cathy Sewell-Cooper joined the Oakmere Nursery class team at the beginning of this school year. We wish them all the best in their new positions.

Please be assured that we will continue to provide the highest quality of care. We are currently advertising for a new Deputy. If you know of anyone who has the experience and qualifications, please speak with Alyson Gnessen or Celia Mills for more details or look at the YounginHerts recruitment website.

## Mobile Phone Use



Please be aware that as part of new statutory requirements, no staff or parents/visitors should use their mobile phones (or phone cameras) whilst on the playgroup premises. The Playgroup uses a mobile phone for playgroup use only (as the mainline phone is in the hallway). We also use a digital camera to take pictures of the children for their learning journals. These photos are monitored and managed by the Leadership team. If you have any concerns regarding this ruling, please speak with Mrs Mills.

## Organic Fruit & Vegetables

As part of our drive to 'eat better, start better' we are able to offer produce through 'Farmer's Choice'. One of our St John's families has highly recommended these organic fruit and vegetables. The produce is ordered weekly and delivered to the playgroup, where you will collect it. The playgroup is offered a percentage of the takings towards our fund raising.



More details are available on the attached flyer and further details are available on [www.abelandcole.co.uk](http://www.abelandcole.co.uk). If enough families are interested, we will start this scheme in the next half term.

Please lodge your interest with Mrs Mash.

## 'Learning Journal'

Your child's learning journal is available

to view at any time, please speak with your child's key worker and don't forget to take a 'You're a Star at Home' slip in the green plastic pocket at the end of the Notice Board in the upper room.



## Dates for your Diary

### Autumn Term



*29th Oct - 2 Nov Half Term PLAY-GROUP CLOSED*

15th November POLLING DAY, PLAYGROUP CLOSED

Wed Nov 28- Playgroup Stakeholders Meeting, 7.15pm at Baker Street, all welcome.

w/c 26 November-parent consultations

Thur 13 Dec - Nativity Play from 10.30- all children and their families invited. More details to follow

Thurs 20 Dec - Xmas party all children invited and parent helpers required

Fri 21 Dec - last day of term NO LUNCH CLUB

### Spring term 2013

Mon 8 January—Thur 28 March

Half Term 18—22 February PLAYGROUP CLOSED

Mon 8th Jan INSET DAY closed for children

Tues 9th Jan - All children return

Fri 12th Jan p.m. - new children start