

January Newsletter 2012

Toy Box Day Nursery & Pre-School

Dear Parents/ Carers

Welcome to our first newsletter of 2012! We hope you all had a peaceful and relaxing Christmas and are now ready to start the New Year. All the children seemed very happy and excited to see one another again after the Christmas break and for the most part have settled straight back into nursery routine without too many tears.

We would like to extend an especially warm welcome to our new parents/ carers and children who have just joined us this term. We hope that in no time at all you too will settle into nursery routine and feel like you have been with us forever.

Topics – Early Years & Baby Unit

The Baby Room Topic for this month is “Senses”. Throughout this topic the children will be exploring all their senses through tasting, smelling, hearing, looking and touching. Staff will be carrying out activities with the babies which will encourage the exploration of all these senses. These activities will include the making of textured pictures as well as trying to touch and hold ice cubes in order to experience how all these different textures feel. Staff will also be encouraging the babies to taste different foods from around the world.

In order for the children to get the most out of this topic staff have come up with new and innovative ways in which they incorporate various activities dealing with senses into the babies’ daily routines and play.

The Early Years topic this month is “Animals”. The children, with help and encouragement from staff, will be looking through books in order to find out about a wide variety of animals from all over the world. During their explorations they will visit each corner of the globe to find out about animals in their natural habitats such as rainforests, deserts, farms and the Arctic. Throughout the month of January the children will be painting jungle animal skin patterns as well as making textured habitat pictures so they can match the animals to their natural environment. They will also be creating a farm animal number line using lots of paint, glue and collage materials. The usual cutting, sticking, painting and mark making will also be taking place each day which will help support and complement the topic.

To celebrate Chinese New Year on Monday 23rd January the children will be making cards and lanterns which staff will use to decorate the nursery. As it is the Year of the Dragon the children will be making dragon puppets and a large dragon collage for our display.

If any parents/ carers have any menu or activity suggestions which they feel would help enhance further the children's enjoyment and understanding of the current topic please speak to any member of staff and they will be happy to incorporate your ideas into our planning.

Our Rhyme of the Month for the Babies is:

“Cuddly Koala”

Our Rhyme of the Month for the Pre-School is:

“Old MacDonald Had a Farm”

Our Book of the Month for the Pre-School is:

“Three Horrid Pigs”

Children's Christmas Party and Nativity

A huge thank you to all our parents/ carers who helped make our Nativity such an enjoyable and memorable event. The costumes were really lovely and the children all remembered their lines very well. Staff put a lot of time, effort and hard work into rehearsals with the children and the end result spoke for itself. Who knows we may even have the next Humphrey Bogart or Audrey Hepburn waiting in the wings! So thank you very much to all our lovely parents/ carers and staff without whose hard work and dedication we could not have done it.

Thank you also to all our parents/ carers who have given feedback on our Nursery Christmas Party. It was a change from our usual format and we are pleased that everybody including parents, carers, children and staff all enjoyed it equally. The children very much enjoyed playing with one another and the staff in an environment outside of the nursery. The occasion seems to have been such a hit that we will probably repeat the experience next year.

If any parent/ carer has any other ideas which we could try out for our Christmas party next year we would be delighted to hear from you. We are always open to suggestions.

Children in Need

This year our Children In Need appeal raised a staggering £542.57. What a splendid result! A massive thank you to all those parents/ carers and children who participated in the event. You can all be justifiably proud of your efforts.

As usual Toy Box matched the figure raised so a cheque for the grand total of £1085.14 has already been paid into Children In Need. A receipt for this amount is displayed in the entrance lobby for all to see.

Fun & Fitness Competition

Toy Box Day Nursery has entered a “Fun & Fitness Sports Equipment Giveaway”. We are hoping to hold our very first Sports Day in the Summer and feel that the equipment we could win will help us to achieve this. We would love all of our Toy Box family and friends to vote for us to help win our prize.

All you need to do is log onto the competition website and vote for us, giving us a few words of encouragement. This will take less than five minutes of your day and will help all of our children benefit from new and exciting resources for outdoor play. Anybody can vote, parents, carers and grandparents alike. We are all really looking forward to the prospect of a Sports Day and would like your support to help us achieve our goal.

Please speak to Anna who is happy to answer any questions and will be delighted to accommodate any parents/ carers who would like to use the computer facilities in the office to vote for our nursery when collecting their child. Please help us to achieve this together.

Modelling Materials

During the lead up to the festive season we completely depleted our stock of cardboard boxes, plastic bottles and tubes etc. which the children use for model making. The children thoroughly enjoy model making with these materials and enjoy dipping in and out to create little masterpieces at will. Could we please ask all parents/ carers to save used plastic bottles, cereal boxes, cardboard tubes or any other interesting items which they feel the children could use for creative play. Just bring them along to nursery and the staff will be delighted to add them to our stocks.

Early Years Alphabet Table & Baby Unit Colour Table

I would like to remind parents/ carers and especially those parents/ carers who have recently joined us that we have an Alphabet Table which is located in the Main Room.

Each week we concentrate on a new letter of the alphabet. Please encourage your child/ children to remember to bring in an object each week to add to the table. During Circle Time staff talk to the children about the objects as well as the letter and sound the object begins with. The letter of the week is noted on your child/ children's daily sheet and is also displayed on the door in the Main Room.

We still have our "Show and Tell" every Tuesday and "Bring-a-Book Day" every Wednesday. On these days please encourage your child/ children to remember to bring a book or an object that is of particular interest to them which we can all share and discuss during Circle Time.

The Baby Room also focus on a different colour each week. This activity helps to raise awareness of a variety of objects in the babies' environment. It also helps the older babies to prepare for the activities which take place in the Early Years room. Could we please ask all parents/ carers to encourage their children to bring in an object each week to add to the table? The colour of the week is also noted on your child/ children's daily sheet and also on the planning sheet on the wall inside the Baby Room gate.

Nursery Education Grant Funding

For all the children who are currently eligible, funding for this term commenced on Tuesday 3rd January and will end on Friday 30th March. This term your child/ children will be funded for 12 weeks, which will be calculated as follows over three months:

January	- 4 weeks funding
February	- 4 weeks funding
March	- 4 weeks funding

Children will not receive funding during School Holidays and half term breaks. If you have any queries about the Nursery Education Grant Funding please speak to Anna and she will be delighted to answer any queries you may have.

Birthdays

We would like to wish the following children a big "Happy Birthday" for the month of January:

Nicholas C - 2 years old
Robert C - 2 years old
Owen K - 2 years old

Ruby R - 3 years old
Freya C - 3 years old

Seren W - 4 years old
Daniel H - 4 years old
Myles S - 4 years old

Staff Member of the Month

This month no parent/ carer voted for our Staff Member of the Month award. Unfortunately this means there is no winner for the £20.00 prize for Staff Member of the Month for December. I know December was a hectic time for everybody and now that Christmas is behind us things will hopefully get back to normal this month. Please try and take a few moments to vote. It means so much to staff to know that their efforts are recognised and appreciated.

There are plenty voting slips in the entrance lobby. Just pick one up and take it home with you and return it at your leisure. It can then be returned at any time before the end of the month.

Staff Change

Vicky Howard, who works in the Baby Room, will be leaving us at the end of February as she is moving to Sellafield to set up home with her partner. Vicky has been a hardworking, dedicated and trusted member of staff since she joined us two years ago. We are all very sad to lose Vicky and as she starts this new and exciting phase in her life we wish her all the very best.

In preparation for Vicky's departure a new Nursery Nurse, Jenna Cockburn started in the baby room before Christmas. Jenna is a fully qualified and experienced Level 3 Nursery Nurse and she has been working alongside Vicky since mid December. Jenna will continue to work alongside Vicky so that by the time the end of February comes around all the babies will be totally familiar with her and she with them and all their routines.

We have also parted company with our modern apprentice, Lauren Huburn as we felt that despite all our training Toy Box was not the right setting for her.

And Finally

December was a very hectic month for both staff and children alike and we were all delighted when Christmas Eve finally arrived and we could all have a well earned rest. As we start the first term of the New Year we look forward to working closely with all parents/ carers so that together we can achieve the best possible outcomes for all the children in our care.

A Happy New Year to everybody and may 2012 see all your dreams come true.

Noreen, Anna and all the staff at Toy Box Day Nursery