



February/March 2013

BAN THE BUGGY:



By now your child should be walking to nursery school without the aid of a buggy. Whilst the buggy makes it quicker for adults to move children around and have control over them there is a great deal of evidence that shows that young children are not developing the physical skills they need.

RECYCLED RESOURCES:



Please send in clean boxes, containers, lids, ribbons, corks, paper etc. as the children need such resources for the Making Area where they design and create. If you are not sure if we would accept an item please do ask first. Items such as medicine containers, toilet roll innards and cigarette packets are clearly not suitable.

CHANGES TO CHILDCARE:



You may have heard in the media about government proposals that might affect your child's learning and opportunities if you use child care. The Minister for Children, Ms Elizabeth Truss is proposing changing the adult to child ratios in early years settings. For day care settings and child-minders these higher ratios for under-threes will have a really negative impact. As a parent I am sure you can understand how caring for five children under five as home based child-minder would be very challenging if not downright dangerous? What may well happen is that those who can pay more will pay for a lower adult/child ratio and poorer families will find their children's chances reduced further. Young children need the best start in life regardless of their parent's ability to pay.

If you are interested in signing a petition about this go to:

<https://www.change.org/en-GB/petitions/department-for-education-drop-plans-to-increase-child-to-adult-ratios>

FAMILY SUPPORT AT COA



We were fortunate to come across Chelsea Open Air Nursery school when our daughter just turned one and we began to attend the Stay and Play sessions, an ideal opportunity for her to play in an environment with other children and for Mum to meet other Mums and ask advice, where needed, from the Children's Centre staff.

We were very fortunate that our daughter was offered a place at the nursery school and we availed of other services offered by the Children's Centre: a first aid course, the Dad's Saturday group, a cookery course, story box and book making workshops.

The Centre offers a large variety of services and if you can avail of them I would heartily encourage you to do so, to learn a new skill, meet other parents/carers or expand your child's learning with him/her.

We also turned to COA at a very difficult time in our family life when we experienced family breakdown. This may be the most traumatic experience of a person's life and is difficult for everyone concerned. When you have a child, you will naturally be very concerned for the effect it will have on him/her.

I would encourage anyone who goes through this to speak to your child's key worker as soon as you can to inform them of the situation. This will not be easy as you may not know what the full picture is or if it will just be temporary but children pick up on sadness and change very quickly and may show signs that everything is not right at home even before you are able to acknowledge it to others. Your child's key worker, as well as the Head Teacher, will be able to offer extra support to your child, if needed. They can also let you know about anything of concern that he/she is saying about home life or any change in behaviour.

A Family Therapist, Sophie, also attends COA regularly and she can also be a great source of support. You and your partner can attend separately or together, as you wish. Whilst you can speak to her about your own feelings about what is happening, you may find it particularly helpful as a forum for deciding how to handle things with your child e.g. what do you tell them if one parent has moved out, how do you explain this in an age-appropriate way, what will you do about access for the parent who has moved away, how do you introduce them to the other parent's new home.

She can also assist by advising on appropriate books to read with your child to help them discuss their feelings; the local library has a good selection and many books show different family make-up or give children a chance to express their feelings.



Art can also be a very useful way of getting 3 and 4 year olds to express their feelings and there are also work books to support this form of communication.

One key is to emphasize again and again that even though Mummy and Daddy don't live together any more they both love their son/daughter (some young children may blame themselves saying it was because they were naughty or they wet the bed).

With appropriate support from both parents, nursery staff, extended family and friends, and by keeping the child's routine as regular as possible young children should adjust to the new family set up. Research shows that the single greatest factor in a child not being affected in the long term, is that the relationship between his/her parents should continue to be amicable and the child should not be involved in or aware of any arguments or animosity, or expressions of bad feeling about the other parent. This may be difficult at times but it is the best way forward for the benefit of your child.

Sophie can assist with any issue which is of concern to you and your family e.g. bereavement, behavioral issues, emotional issues affecting one of the parents. You do not have to worry or cope on your own, request an appointment with Kathryn. It will help you, and, as a consequence, your child.



VITAMINS:

Do you know we sell vitamins from the school office. Women's vitamins are 91p and children's vitamins cost £1:80. Pick up a leaflet or enquire in the office or from Trish and Heather for more information.



CURRICULUM UPDATE:

Personal, Social and Emotional Development:

The children have made great strides in helping at tidy up time. Many have also been observed helping one another with zips and fasteners on coats etc. They have enjoyed the challenge of many varied visitors from the Mayor and Mayoress, the police, a parent, an orthopaedic surgeon, a pet owner and baby George being bathed as a range of role-models. Considering the fact that they are all younger than the children we used to have they have done remarkably well.

Physical Development:

There has been a great surge of interest in mark making but many younger children and those with developmental needs need far more experience of tactile mark making, dough etc. to build up their digit muscles and co-ordination skills. We will move on to scissor skills and observational drawing after half term.



The children have adored the new play equipment in the garden and risen to new challenges in terms of climbing, balancing and co-ordination. Many have supported less confident peers too. Stilts, scooters and bikes have been good for developing balancing and turn-taking. Indoors the balance beam and other equipment has really challenged many children in dealing with their socks/tights and shoes as this equipment has to be used bare foot in order to be most effective. |





Communication and Language:

Mud play in the garden in the new hobbit house, sand pit building have been great for developing language following on from the builders who installed the new play equipment who were excellent role-models.

Lunchtime, external visitors and the language of shapes have also been strong sources of motivation for talk too.

Literacy:

Our focus on the books of Julia Donaldson have laid the foundations for rhyming skills but many children need far more experience. They have really begun to grasp the initial sounds of their names and sounds/letters associated with environmental logos too.



Mathematics:

The children have now established a reasonable understanding of 2D shapes as names. Some are able to match and name but for others this is still an emerging skill. They adored using the giant inflatable shapes and the parachute as well as tessellating with unusual and irregular shapes. We will move on to shape printing, shape snap and a range of board games.

Understanding the World:

Carer's Fortnight has developed the children's understanding of our local community. See above. Chinese New Year was celebrated with an exciting sharing plus noodles at lunch time!



Expressive Arts:

Making models with a purpose using the big blocks has required a lot of communication and negotiation skills from the children. This has resulted in some great models and collaborative role-play too. The music groups with our lovely parent pianist have been very beneficial too. The children are now using the resources in the music corner independently with purpose as a result. Exploring paint mixing in different ways with the lazy Susan and using dry powder paint has challenged some children in describing what they are doing and why. The hospital role-play has been very beneficial as has the fire fighter role-play outside.



DATES FOR YOUR DIARY:

26th February - Forest School 3

5th March - Forest School 4

7th March - World Book Day

8th March - Mothering Sunday sharing

12th March - Forest School 5

15th March - Red Nose Day

18th March - Spring/Easter Festival Focus Fortnight

19th March - Forest School 6

28th March - End of term. All part timers attend from 9-11:30a.m. All full timers from 9a.m. to 1p.m. prompt please.

