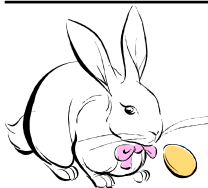


Playgroup News



Welcome back to all the children and families after Easter. We hope you had a lovely break.

A very warm welcome to the new children that have started with us this term. We would also like to welcome Sarah Whitty our new Deputy playgroup leader. Sarah is a very experienced practitioner who is just completing her BA (Hons) in Education studies and we are lucky to have her on board! Mrs Hunt is stepping down from her role as deputy but fortunately for us and her key children she is staying on with St John's as a playgroup assistant.

Ofsted

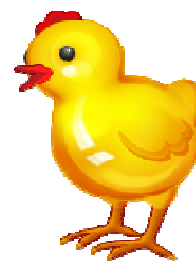
As you are aware we were inspected by Ofsted in January. Ofsted is our regulating body that ensures that standards in early years settings are maintained to a high standard. The inspection report has been distributed to all parents. If you did not receive a copy please speak to Mrs Murphy or you may download it from the Ofsted web-

Fees and Funding

As you are aware, the fees are £10.20 from this term, in line with Herts County Council session rate. We would appreciate prompt payment **in advance** either weekly/half term or for the full term. Please note your child's place is at risk if you fall more than two weeks behind in your payment. If your child is over 3 years of age before 31st March 2009, they are eligible for the government grant, of 15 hours of free playgroup sessions please see Mrs Murphy. If you think you may be eligible for funding as you are on benefits but your child is under 3, please speak to Mrs Murphy.

The Early Years Foundation Stage

We hope your children enjoyed the "new life" and "growing" theme this 1/2 term. They have been learning about babies growing up into children, creating a vegetable garden and watching our chicks hatch from their eggs. After Easter we hope to extend this theme further by creating a sensory garden with the children and a nature area outside where the children can be "nature detectives" exploring mini-beasts and plant life. During the month of April we will also be having 2 weeks of "Mess and Mayhem" where we will be exploring a messy play theme.



Your children will have opportunities to explore paint, pasta, cornflour, make playdough, jelly, ice and much more. Please do not dress your children in their best clothes during these two weeks in April. Thank you.

Lunch Club

Our lunch club is open every day at the new rate of £3.40 per session. It still remains excellent value for money. It would be lovely to see some new faces. That extra hour is a great opportunity for children to develop their social skills, eating and chatting over lunch with children often benefiting from this smaller grouping. A reminder that lunch club fees are due in advance of bookings. See our lunch club booklet in the foyer for further information or speak to Mrs Murphy.



Child collection

We take the matter of your child's safety very seriously at St John's. For this reason we are introducing a password system to make the collection procedure of your child safer. On your child's registration form you have nominated 3 people who are authorized to collect your child. It is our policy that unless we have been informed by yourselves and the collection book has been signed we will not allow your child to go home with anyone else. Although this system appears robust we would like to increase our security for your children by asking you to supply a password to us that we will request from any person collecting your child who is not familiar to us. You will be asked to change the password at the beginning of each term and we request that you supply the password in the sealed envelope supplied.



Lunch Boxes

For those who attend lunch club we would like to draw your attention to the fact that we do not have large enough Fridge facilities to accommodate the lunch boxes. For this reason we recommend that you place an ice block in your child's lunch box especially as the weather gets warmer. If you are unable to do this we would recommend that you avoid cold meats in your child's lunch. May we also draw your attention to our policy that no nuts must be brought into the setting



Fruit Sharing

Thank you to those who have been contributing to our bring and share fruit days on Weds and Thurs. The children have enjoyed lots of different fruits.



Please keep up your donations of fruit to help us provide the children with a healthy snack each day.

Nappies

Please could you supply any nappies and wipes your child may require during the morning. We always ensure that the children in nappies are changed in the course of the morning and it is preferable to use the child's personal nappies and wipes that suit their skin to avoid any allergic reactions. We would appreciate your cooperation in this matter.



Afternoon sessions

After Easter we will be offering afternoon sessions from 12.15 to 3.15 pm on Mondays, Tuesdays and Thursdays. If your child is interested in attending all day or afternoons please speak to Mrs Murphy

Capital Grant

In January we were pleased to announce that the TOPS Grant and Capital grant that we applied for in October were successful. However the £25,000 has not arrived yet from County due to a delay in the lease paper work. Unfortunately this means we will not be able to complete transformation of our outside play area over Easter as originally planned. However, we will go ahead with as much development as possible including the development of a sensory garden and a nature area.



Dates for your Diary

SUMMER TERM

**Monday 20th April INSET DAY NO PLAYGROUP-
Tues 21st April - Friday 17th July 2009**

Friday 1st May 2pm Oakmere mini marathon for playgroup and Nursery children

Monday 4th May Bank Holiday, playgroup closed

Friday 15th May Photographer: Black & White Photos, more details to follow

Monday 25th - Friday 29th May Half term, 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.

& summer party

17th July 2009 LAST DAY of TERM