

# CHARLTON PLAYGROUP

## Information Pack

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**Charity Number 1034974**

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## PLAYGROUP STAFF

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Play Assistant

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Volunteer

Nanny Linda

Volunteer



# HELLO AND WELCOME!!

We hope you will find this booklet a useful introduction to the Playgroup and that should you decide to enrol your child or children with us, the information contained here will ensure a smooth and happy progression for them through playgroup to school.

All children are welcome to attend irrespective of gender, race, language, culture, disability, learning difficulty.

Charlton playgroup was established in 1967 and has been operating in the village of Charlton, for the past 40 years. The playgroup offers educational care for children in the local area aging from 2-5 years inclusive. The facility is a registered charity and approved by the Ofsted authority to provide this care.

The service currently offered by the playgroup is from 9am till 3pm five days a week (Mon-Fri).

The playgroup is run by an elected committee, which includes parents and staff. There is currently 6 qualified staff on the payroll.

The playgroup is funded via 3 main sources,

1. Childcare vouchers from Northampton County Council
2. Fees paid by parents/carers.
3. Fundraising events held during the year.

## Charlton Playgroup aims to:

- Provide high quality care and education for children primarily below statutory school age
- Work in partnership with parents to help children to learn and develop
- Add to the life and well-being of the local community
- Offer children and their parents a service which promotes equality and values diversity

## As a member of Charlton Playgroup, your child:

- Is in a safe and stimulating environment
- Is given generous care and attention, because of our high ratio of adults to children
- Has the chance to join with other children and adults to live, play, work and learn together
- Is helped to take forward her/his learning and development by being helped to build on what she/he already knows and can do
- Has a personal key person who makes sure your child makes satisfying progress
- Is in a playgroup which see you as a partner in helping your child to learn and develop
- Is in a playgroup in which parents help to share the service it offers.

## The Curriculum Provided By Charlton Playgroup

Children start to learn about the world around them from the moment they are born. The care and education offered by Charlton Playgroup helps children to continue to do this by providing all of the children with interesting activities that are right for their age and stage of development.

For all children the playgroup follows a set of guidelines for the Early Years foundation stage of education. These guidelines are set out in a document, published by the Early Years Department for Education and Skills, and is based on the Every Child Matters change for children agenda. Playgroup follows this guidance.

The guidance divides children's learning and development into six areas:

- Personal, Social and Emotional Development;
- Communication, Language and Literacy Development;
- Problem Solving, Reasoning and Numeracy;
- Knowledge and Understanding of the World;
- Physical Development; and
- Creative Development.

For each area, the guidance sets out early learning goals. These goals state what it is expected that children will know and be able to do by the end of the reception year of their education.

For each early learning goal, the guidance sets out stepping stones, which describe the stages through which children are likely to pass as they move to achievement of the goal. Charlton Playgroup uses the early learning goals and their stepping stones to help us to track each child's progress and to enable us to provide the right activities to help all of the children move towards achievement of the early learning goals.

### **Personal, Social and Emotional Development**

This area of children's development covers:

- having a positive approach to learning and finding out about the world around them;
- having confidence in themselves and their ability to do things, and valuing their own achievements;
- being able to get on, work and make friendships with other people, both children and adults;
- becoming aware of - and being able to keep to - the rules which we all need to help us to look after ourselves, other people and our environment;
- being able to dress and undress themselves, and look after their personal hygiene needs; and
- being able to expect to have their ways of doing things respected and to respect other people's ways of doing things.

### **Communication Language and Literacy:**

This area of children's development covers:

- being able to use conversation with one other person, in small groups and in large groups to talk with and listen to others;
- adding to their vocabulary by learning the meaning of - and being able to use - new words;
- being able to use words to describe their experiences;
- getting to know the sounds and letters which make up the words we use;
- listening to - and talking about - stories;
- knowing how to handle books and that they can be a source of stories and information;
- knowing the purposes for which we use writing; and
- making their own attempts at writing.

### **Problem Solving, Reasoning and Numeracy**

This area of children's development covers:

- building up ideas about how many, how much, how far and how big;
- building up ideas about patterns, the shape of objects and parts of objects, and the amount of space taken up by objects;
- starting to understand that numbers help us to answer questions about how many, how much, how far and how big;
- building up ideas about how to use counting to find out how many; and
- being introduced to finding the result of adding more or taking away from the amount we already have.

### **Knowledge and Understanding of the World**

This area of children's development covers:

- finding out about the natural world and how it works;
- finding out about the made world and how it works;
- learning how to choose - and use - the right tool for a task;
- learning about computers, how to use them and what they can help us to do;
- starting to put together ideas about past and present and the links between them;
- beginning to learn about their locality and its special features; and
- learning about their own and other cultures.

### **Physical Development**

This area of children's development covers:

- gaining control over the large movements which we can make with our arms, legs and bodies, so that they can run, jump, hop, skip, roll, climb, balance and lift;
- gaining control over the small movements we can make with our arms, wrists and hands, so that they can pick up and use objects, tools and materials; and
- learning about the importance of - and how to look after - their bodies.

### **Creative Development**

This area of children's development covers:

- using paint, materials, music, dance, words, stories and role-play to express their ideas and feelings; and
- becoming interested in the way that paint, materials, music, dance, words, stories and role-play can be used to express ideas and feelings.

The guidance is focused on the Every Child Matters Agenda which is split into 5 areas:

- Be Safe
- Be Healthy
- Achieve Economic and Social Wellbeing
- Enjoy & Achieve
- Making a Positive Contribution

The guidance also offers themes and commitments which we are then inspected on during ofsted inspections.

A Unique child- includes diversity and special needs, build a safe and healthy environment and ensure children develop to their full potential.

Positive Relationships - to help children respect each other, work in partnership with parents, build on the key worker system and support children's learning.

Enabling Environments - to ensure children are given a stimulating environment in which to learn, be observed and assessed and working in partnership with others.

Learning & Development- this is where the educational guidelines are found.

Play helps young children to learn and develop through doing and talking, which research has shown to be the means by which young children think. Charlton Playgroup uses the early learning goals and their stepping stones to plan and provide a range of play activities which help children to make progress in each of the areas of learning and development. In some of these activities children decide how they will use the activity and, in others, an adult takes the lead in helping the children to take part in the activity. In all activities information from the early learning goals and stepping stones has been used to decide what equipment to provide and how to provide it.

### **Working Together for your Children**

Charlton Playgroup's ratio of adults to children helps us to:

- Give time and attention to each child;
- Talk with the children about their interests and activities;
- Help children to experience and benefit from the activities we provide; and
- Allow the children to explore and be adventurous in safety.

### **Management and Administration**

The Playgroup is run by an elected committee, which ensures that major decision-making is in the hands of the parents who use the group. The committee are responsible for:

- Managing the playgroups finances
- Employing and managing the staff
- Making sure that the playgroup has and works to policies
- Making sure that the playgroup works in partnership with the children's parents.
- Fundraising Activities

Our Annual General Meeting, at which the committee for the following year is elected, is held in September and parents will be informed in good time so they are able to attend. However, you can join the committee at any time - please contact any member for further information.

## **Fees**

A registration fee of £15.00 is payable which includes a guaranteed place at the playgroup, welcome pack and playgroup sweatshirt or cardigan for your child. Please see current Fee Policy for Playgroup Fees.

Nursery funding is available the term after your child turns 3. Playgroup will provide you with a form to complete to apply for funding. Funding applies to a maximum number of 5 sessions per week over 38 weeks in a year. Any sessions attended above this amount will be billed for.

Fees must still be paid if children are absent without notice for a short period of time. If your child has to be absent over a long period of time, please talk to the committee chair or playgroup manager.

## **Funding**

We receive no core government funding. To operate, we solely rely on fees, government grants for 3 year olds, and fundraising activities. The committee are therefore always looking for parental involvement for help and ideas with fundraising. If you would like to help with fundraising or join the committee then please contact the chairperson.

## **The Service we Offer**

We are open five days a week between 9.00am and 11.30am, and 12.30 to 3.00pm. We can also provide a lunchtime session between 11.30am and 12.30pm. Alternatively we can provide full day care.

We are closed during school holidays and follow the same term dates as Charlton and Newbottle Primary School.

We provide care and education for young children aged between 2 and 5.

The staff and committee recommend that children attend a minimum of 2 sessions a week. It is felt that this helps children to settle in more quickly.

## **The First Step**

We operate a waiting list and in order for your child to be included we need a registration form (included with this pack) complete and returned to the Playgroup together with a your non-refundable deposit of £15 which will secure your child's place. Details of this are included in our charging policy.

As the time approaches for your child to start Playgroup, we recommend that your child visits Playgroup and stays for a whole session. There is no charge for this visit.

## **Starting at Charlton Playgroup**



## **The first days**

We want your child to feel happy and safe at the playgroup. To make sure that this is the case, the staff will work with you to decide on how to help your child to settle into the playgroup. The playgroup has a policy about helping children to settle into the playgroup.

## **Clothing**

Each child has a named peg in the hall for coats, bags and hats. Each child also has a named drawer for paintings, letters etc, so please check it at the end of each session. The playgroup provides protective clothing for the children when they play with messy activities and we also have some wellies for outside play, but we ask you to bring a bag with spare clothes and if necessary, pull ups, wipes and nappy bags. Please could you name clothes, especially sweatshirts as this helps us to reunite children with their clothes. Please remember a sun hat in summer and a warm hat and gloves for outdoor play in winter.

## **How Parents take part in the Playgroup**

As a member of the Pre-school Learning Alliance we recognise parents as the first and most important educators of their children. All of the staff see themselves as co-workers with you in providing care and education for your child. There are many ways in which parents take part in making the playgroup a welcoming and stimulating place for children and parents, such as:

- Exchanging knowledge about their children's needs, activities interests and progress with the staff
- Helping at sessions of the playgroup
- Sharing their own special interests with the children
- Helping to provide, make and look after the equipment and materials used in the children's play activities.
- Being part of the management of the playgroup
- Taking part in events and informal discussions about the activities and curriculum provided by playgroup.

## **Terms and Conditions**

In the event of your child leaving playgroup, for any reason other than them starting school, the Playgroup will require 6 weeks' notice and a leaving form must be completed. If your child leaves before the end of the 6 week notice period and is fee-paying, then the balance of the fees owed up to the end of the 6 week period must be paid.

## **Dropping of and Collection**

Parents are welcome to use the top car park when dropping off and collecting their child but are reminded that they must not use the bottom car park. The barrier will be locked at the end of the day as staff members leave. Parents are also asked to ensure that the front door to the village hall is firmly shut. It is locked once a session is underway.

Please do not arrive to collect your child before the end of the session. Our collection

procedure is designed to ensure maximum safety for your child. We therefore request that you remain outside until a member of staff advises you that your child is ready for collection.

If someone other than yourself will be collecting your child please inform the staff when your child is brought to Playgroup. In the event of an emergency please let the staff know who is collecting your child by telephoning the playgroup on (01295) 812909.

### **Health Matters**

For the benefit of your own child, the staff, and other children attending Playgroup, please keep your child at home if they are unwell. Our staff are qualified to administer routine first aid. If a child becomes unwell or has a serious accident, every effort will be made to contact the parents. When parents cannot be reached we will be responsible for contacting a doctor or summoning an ambulance if necessary. We ask parents to supply us with emergency contact numbers and full details of any relevant medical problem or allergy. Please let us know if your emergency contact number changes, it is important that we have up-to-date information.

In the case of vomiting or diarrhoea, children should be kept at home for 48 hours from the last occurrence of sickness. If a child is being treated with antibiotics it is our recommendation that they should stay at home for a full 48 hours.

### **Special Needs**

The number of adults present in playgroup enables us to give each child some individual attention. They are able to progress at their own rate in all areas of development. We are experienced in working in close liaison with professionals across the range of special needs. If you would like to discuss the group's ability to meet your own child's special needs, please talk to the playgroup leader or your child's key worker.

### **Playgroup Staff**

We are proud of the high ratio of adults to children in our playgroup. This ensures individual attention to the needs and development of each child. Our staff are well trained and very experienced in working with young children.

### **Key Workers**

Our key worker system gives each member of staff particular responsibility for a specific group of children. Each child in the group has one special adult to relate to, which can make settling into the group very much easier. In addition, the key worker is in a position to tailor the group's curriculum to the unique needs of each individual child. The key worker maintains links with the child's home setting, working with parents through shared record keeping. This ensures that all children are supported in reaching their full potential.

## **Record-Keeping**

Because so many adults help in the group, we are able to implement an excellent record-keeping system in which observations of the children in the group, and at home, are used as a basis for drawing up a curriculum for each child.

## **Training**

Our membership of the Pre-School Learning Alliance (PLA) ensures that we are constantly in touch with new thinking in the field of child education and care. We receive a monthly magazine offering practical advice and up-to-date information, and have access to a range of professionally produced publications. Parents may ask to see any of these. In addition, on-going training is available through PLA courses, which welcome both staff and parents. Informal training is available through local meetings and conferences, and parents will always be informed about these.

## **Complaints**

The committee recognises that problems do arise and are always happy to discuss any concerns you may have regarding the playgroup and will endeavour to find a solution. For further details please find attached the complaints policy. Your first point of contact is the Playgroup Chairman.

## **Parent Helper Duties**

Research has shown that children learn better when parents/carers are involved. Our parent/carer rota system gives the parent/carer the opportunity to take an active part in their children's learning within the setting. It also gives the parent/carer the opportunity to see how their child is progressing through the areas of learning.

In addition to this, the rota system provides a valuable opportunity for the children to see their parents/carers in a new role.

### **The Duties of the Helper is as Follows:**

1. During the session, circulate around the various activities, helping out if required, washing hands and generally having fun with the children, as we believe that the children learn best when they are enjoying themselves.
2. Support the staff assisting with any topic activities planned for the day as may be requested. Playing with the children may involve reading with them, talking and listening to them, becoming involved in role-play/imaginary games, painting, construction/building and play dough shaping.
3. Support the children in any of the areas of learning available to them on the day, for instance number work, letter recognition and puzzle activities.
4. Please prepare the children's snacks and drinks ready for break time and wash up afterwards, using playgroup equipment kept in the toy cupboard. The staff will advise you of the timing of this break.

It is not expected that the helpers clear up during or after the session, unless there are staff shortages. Staff would then appreciate the helper assisting them to clear away the toys at the end of the session.

Also, please be aware that there must always be at least two members of staff in the room plus one other staff member or adult (depending on our child: adult ratio for any given day), so please check with staff there are enough people in the room before leaving it.

Please remember that the play staff greatly appreciates the parent helper's assistance as it ensures the smooth running of the session. If there is anything you are unsure of DO ASK!

### **The Benefits of Parental Involvement in Playgroup**

The Pre-School Learning Alliance recognises parents as the first and most important educators of their young children. Our playgroup aims to support parents. Parents are welcomed:

- To work in the group with the children.
- To work with playgroup staff to record information about their child's progress and achievements.
- To assist with fund-raising.
- To take part in the management of the playgroup.
- To attend open meetings of the PLA.
- To attend training courses, workshops and conferences organised by the PLA.

There are long term benefits of parental involvement which starts within the playgroup setting - the early participation may encourage the parent to continue actively taking part in primary and secondary schools, where it is equally beneficial to all concerned.

We at Charlton Playgroup very much appreciate and hope to keep your continued support.

### **Policy Documents Attached**

We have a number of policy documents including those listed below which are adhered to at all times, please find copies of the following policies attached.

- Charging Policy
- Complaints Policy

We hope that your child's time in playgroup will be a very happy and productive one. If you have any queries or if we can be of any help, please contact the staff/committee at any time.