

Autumn Term Newsletter

The new term is under way at Carousel and many children have moved into a new room of the nursery. This is an exciting time at nursery as staff and children get to know each other, and children get used to their new rooms. All parents should know their child's new Key Person, so please ask if you're not sure.

Focus Article: Communication & Language

Communication and Language has long been one of the prime areas of learning in the Early Years Foundation Stage, along with Physical development and Personal, Social and Emotional skills. However, the revised EYFS (see article on page 3) places a new and greater emphasis on the importance of communication and language for young children's overall development. Communication & language underpins all the other areas of learning covered in the EYFS, and is vital for a child's success in the foundation years and beyond.

As children engage in back and forth interactions with their parent or carer, they develop understanding and thinking skills. This occurs even in the youngest children, as they begin to understand the gestures, expressions and noises they see and hear. This forms the very important foundation for language development. As children get older, they process what they experience and explore the world around them through their own use of language.

Oral language skills allow children to access other areas of the curriculum, at nursery and once they start school. Without strong communication and language skills children will struggle to understand what is happening around them and won't be as able to make cognitive leaps or develop their thinking skills. Language and communication is of course fundamental for reading and literacy skills. It is also much more difficult for adults to assess what a child knows or understands if they cannot communicate.

Prior to the pandemic there were already concerns about the number of young children starting school with lower than expected communication and language skills. Reasons for this include social disadvantage, use of screens and failure by children's services to pick up on problems early on.

Unfortunately, the pandemic has caused further setbacks with children's speech and language skills. Children have had fewer opportunities for interactions and have spent less time at nursery or school. Furthermore, many hard-pressed parents have struggled to juggle work, childcare and possibly home-schooling, meaning interactions with their younger children have suffered. In addition, the checks that should be carried out by Health Visitors before a child is 2 have either been missed or have been done virtually, meaning many children with speech and language needs have slipped through the net. Unfortunately, some local councils are continuing with virtual visits to cut costs and catch up with the backlog.

Parents have a huge influence on the development of their child's speech & language skills. Regular back and forth interactions are vital, during which adults should comment on what their child is doing or is interested in. Parents should take every opportunity to communicate with their children from birth, echoing the words they use back to them and engaging in conversation throughout that day, every day. Reading and allowing children to engage in role-play and storytelling helps develop their language skills immensely. Limiting a child's use of screens (and your own) is also very important, to ensure they are not missing out on time that could be spent socializing and interacting with others.

At Carousel, in line with the revised EYFS, we are focused on creating a language-rich environment. Our practitioners are aware of the need to engage in high quality interactions with children throughout the day, and will be observing each other doing so to improve their practice. We are also experienced in spotting any speech and language delays and taking the necessary action to address this.

Carousel Day Nursery & Pre-school

Issue 5

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Nursery news

- We want to say thank you for all the lovely messages and gifts we received from our pre-school leavers. It is wonderful for our practitioners to know how appreciated they are.
- Most parents are probably aware that our manager Katharine is expecting her second child, due on 11th December. Katharine has chosen to take 4 months' maternity leave, during which time Abbie Ferry will be our Acting Manager.
- Zoe Hollinshead left Carousel's employment this month. We wish her all the best for the future.
- Georgia Hurst will be based in our Hedgehog room from September as an additional room assistant, so there will be three permanent members of staff working in the room.
- Please note that our fees increased this month (September)—please ensure your direct debit payments reflect the change in your child's fees.
- Your child's nursery report will be issued in November—please look out for this.
- Following the success of our summer picnics, we will be making these an annual event. As such, we will no longer be holding our weekend Christmas parties, and will instead have a Christmas Week in which we will hold a Christmas party for the children each afternoon.
- **Dates for your Diary:**
Greece Week—w/c 27th September



Something new—Parent Observations

Parent Observations are not strictly something new to Carousel, but we want to take the opportunity to let parents know just how important they are.

Observations are a way of recording something that a child is able to do. At nursery our practitioners complete one observation of each child per week, documenting a way in which they have developed. This could be the achievement of a new skill they have been working on for a while, or the early stages of them meeting a new developmental milestone.

Often, children will do different things at home and nursery. This may be because parents have different resources at their disposal, or can offer their child experiences that nursery cannot. Children are sometimes more able and willing to show a new skill during 1-1 time with a parent at home than they are at nursery, and may therefore do something earlier.

It is very helpful for our nursery practitioners to know what a child is able to do at home, and for this to be a regular dialogue between parent and practitioner. Parent Observations are a great way to complement these conversations, as they provide us with some evidence of what the child has done, and we can keep a record. Observations are

usually made up of some photos and an explanation of what the child has done, what they have learned and what they need to do next to progress their learning.

We have Parent Observation templates available to print and download on the Home Learning Area of our website (login is your child's surname plus code 493071). We want to really encourage parents to complete these observations occasionally, particularly if your child does something new, surprising or impressive! We would suggest printing off a few of the observation templates so you have them to hand if you see your child doing something you want to record.

As we have mentioned in previous issues of this newsletter, what children do at home with their parents is extremely important for their learning and development. Using our Home Learning Area and completing Parent Observations to share with your child's Key Person is an excellent way for you to work in partnership with us to further your child's education.

We hope to receive some Parent Observations soon and look forward to hearing about what the children have been up to with you at home.

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Getting Out There

As we put the pandemic behind us, we are keen to get back out into the community with the children at Carousel. We all know that children have suffered as a result of not doing the things that form part of normal life, and we want to rectify this.

We often take the children on walks in the local area, but over the last 18 months we have been restricted to walks around our immediate vicinity. Over the next few weeks we will begin taking our older children further afield to places such as Billericay high street, the library, shops and Mill Meadows. These trips will form morning or afternoon activities and will be accordingly planned to make them educational experiences. For example, children will be given an item to find in a supermarket and will engage in story time at the library.

Beyond this, we will be enquiring about trips to local sites such as the fire station and Barley-

lands. We will be in contact about this in due course.

Another effective way that children can engage with the community is by having people visit us at nursery to talk about the job they do. We are therefore calling out to parents to get in touch with us if you do a job that you think you could talk about to young children. The obvious ones include doctors, dentists and emergency workers, but we would love to hear from anyone who thinks they do something that pre-school children would find interesting. A small talk (possibly accompanied by some props) would be all that was required.

Please email Katharine or speak to a member of staff if you would like to volunteer. We hope to hear from some parents about this, but if we don't get volunteers you may well find that we approach you instead...



The Revised EYFS

As of 1st September 2021 the revised Early Years Foundation Stage came into effect. The EYFS sets out the standards that school and childcare providers must meet for the learning, development and care of children from birth to 5. It is a statutory requirement for all nurseries to implement the EYFS, and we are therefore now following the revised version.

The document is available for anyone to view online and we have a link to the

EYFS on the Parent Support page of our website.

The revisions to the EYFS do not require us to make any major changes to the way we teach the children at Carousel. A big new focus of the document is that practitioners spend less time doing paperwork and more time interacting with the children. We are already doing this because when Katharine joined us as manager she felt the paperwork was taking practitioners away from the chil-

dren and so we reduced the number of observations the staff conduct. She also introduced other changes to limit and streamline the administrative burden on staff.

Other changes to the EYFS include a new focus on Communication and Language, the importance of high quality adult-child interactions, the introduction of oral health as a teaching topic and an awareness that all children develop at different rates.

Uniform

Uniform is not compulsory at Carousel, but we strongly encourage the parents of our upper nursery children (Rabbits and pre-school) to dress their children in our uniform.

Wearing uniform is a good way to prepare children for starting school. It also gives them a sense of belonging to a place, and most are very excited to dress in their Carousel clothes.

In a practical sense, our royal blue polo shirts and

jumpers are less easily stained, and dressing your child in these can prevent their own clothes from getting messy.

We have uniform available in sizes 2-3, 3-4 and 5-6. We sell polo shirts for £8 each and jumpers for £10 each. Please speak to a member of staff if you would like to purchase some. Any parents who had uniform on order should now have received it, but please speak to a member of staff if you have not.





Carousel Day Nursery & Pre-school Ltd

32 Thynne Road

Billericay

Essex

CM11 2HH

Phone: 01277 632362

Mobile: 07436272259

Email: info@carouselnursery.net

www.carouselnursery.net

Early Learning for a Brighter Future

Carousel Day Nursery & Pre-school is a family run business, established in 1992. We are a small nursery that provides an excellent standard of education and care for children aged 3 months to five years. We are situated in a bungalow specially modified to create a home-from-home feel, in a quiet residential area of Billericay and can accommodate 31 children each day. Our nursery is separated into a Lower and Upper nursery and consists of four rooms—one for each age group: Ducklings (3-18mths), Hedgehogs (18-28mths), Rabbits (28-36mths) and pre-school Squirrels (3-5yrs). We also have a lovely outside area with a range of suitable equipment for the children to explore and develop their motor skills. At Carousel we are constantly striving to provide an excellent quality of education because we believe in the importance of early learning for a brighter future.

Recommend Us

Many prospective parents who enquire about a place for their child at Carousel come to us via a recommendation from someone they know.

Please do continue to recommend us to your friends, neighbours and family members, if you feel you can. Whilst the community has endured lockdown, people have been meeting less often and as such recommendations have been

harder to come by.

It is of course reassuring for people to have a nursery recommended to them by someone they trust, and it is by far our preferred way of finding new business too.

As children's groups and events start up again this autumn, please remember us in your conversations and keep sending people our way!

Thank you.

