

Spring Term Newsletter

The birds are beginning to sing, some crocuses are peeping through the cold soil and the evenings are gradually getting a little bit longer. It may still be cold outside, but spring is on the way! As always there's lots happening at Carousel this term and we hope you find this an enjoyable and informative read.

Focus Article: Making Mealtimes Enjoyable

Mealtimes are incredibly important for us at Carousel and we believe there are three things that help to make them go well: variety, fun with friends and pudding!

Variety is the spice of life, as the saying goes, and this is definitely true when it comes to food. From when a child is first weaned, they can be given a wide range of flavours and textures. Most parents want their children to eat the same meals as them, since this makes for lovely family time and is much more convenient, but for some parents this can feel like a battle. Sometimes foods may be rejected, but it is important to calmly persevere to teach children what foods are good for them and tasty to eat. It is also very important to ensure that any food type that is taken out of a child's diet (for example dairy if a lactose intolerance is suspected), is only removed on medical advice and only for as long as is necessary. Removing a food type may well be the right thing to do, but children need to eat from all the food groups to grow and thrive, so it should be done with great care.

As adults we know that mealtimes are sociable occasions. We enjoy eating with our partners, families and friends, and going out for dinner is a special occasion. Children need to be shown that this is what mealtimes are all about. As busy parents it can sometimes be tempting to sit a child in their highchair or at the table and simply feed them. We (rightly) worry about how much and what they are eating, but we should attach just as much importance to *how* our children are eating. It is our job to show them that mealtimes are enjoyable, social events. So eat as many meals as possible with your children, taking the opportunity to talk to them about their day and build up your relationships. Mealtimes also present brilliant teaching opportunities across a huge range of

topics. Parents would probably find it very entertaining to listen to the conversations that go on during our nursery mealtimes, not only between the children and nursery nurses, but amongst the children themselves. Sometimes they are hilarious!

Finally, pudding. At Carousel we work very hard to create balanced, nutritious menus. We know what young children should be eating and we offer meals that provide them with the fuel and nutrients they need. But we can take this approach to the food we offer without believing that we should ban sugary foods altogether. We think that making something forbidden makes it instantly more desirable, and we don't want to create that attitude to sweet things. We also don't believe that sweet foods should be offered to children only as a treat or a reward, because this makes these foods stand out from others as something special that should be sought out and devoured. Children's tastebuds do mean they are often drawn to sweet things, and our culture does often depict them as something special. But we think trying to fight against this with outright bans is the wrong approach, and that the occasional pudding (usually homemade at Carousel) should be an enjoyable and unremarkable part of a child's balanced diet.

Providing children with a healthy, balanced diet isn't rocket science and there is plenty of advice out there about how to do it well. But eating is about more than just giving children food. It is about enjoying food, experiencing wonderful tastes and textures and sharing that food with family and friends in lots of different ways and in lots of different places during our lifetimes. A wide variety of foods, sociable mealtimes and a healthy enjoyment of pudding are, we believe, important building blocks for a good relationship with food for life.

Carousel Day Nursery & Pre-school

Issue 6

February 2022

Contents

- Focus Article: Making Mealtimes Enjoyable
- Nursery news
- Parent Questionnaire Feedback
- Oral health
- Sibling Priority Places
- Day Swaps
- Professional photographs



Nursery news

- We are delighted to announce that Katharine gave birth to a baby girl, Eleanor, on 23rd December 2021. The family are all doing well and settling nicely into life as a four.
- **Student Placements:** every Monday for the next six months we will have two students from Chelmsford College working with us. One is Jessica Hornsby, who in fact came to Carousel as a young child. The other is Olivia Roland.
- **Parking Notice:** this is a polite request that parents please park considerately on our driveway. There is space for three cars on the drive, but sometimes people park in such a way that only two cars can fit on. Please ensure you don't pull up in a hurry across two spaces. Thank you.
- **Covid Restrictions:** We can now allow parents into the nursery to drop off or collect their child. This excludes the pre-school for whom drop off and pick up will continue to be at the door, as a way of preparing them for school.
- **Improvements:** We will be having new toilets built in the pre-school room over Easter, which will reduce the need for children to walk through the Rabbit room to reach the toilets and will make better use of the available space.
- **Dates for your Diary:**
World Book Day—3rd March (children can dress up as their favourite book character)
Africa Week - 19th-22nd April
Platinum Jubilee Week—30th May-1st June



Parent Questionnaire Feedback

In November we sent out Parent Questionnaires along with your child's report. These questionnaires help us to find out what you think about how we do things at Carousel, and how we could do things differently. Your feedback is really important in helping us shape our practice, and that is why we try to encourage parents to participate by giving away a lovely hamper of treats in a raffle draw. Unfortunately, quite a few parents didn't respond to our questionnaire, which is disappointing for us and means your voice has not been heard. In future, we would be really grateful if you could take five minutes of your time to complete the questionnaire.

The feedback we did receive from the parents who responded was very helpful. Overall, parents are very satisfied with our menus and there isn't a strong desire among parents for us to provide any information about local services—you feel you can access this yourself and that the nursery management team is very approachable and helpful when needed. Please do always contact us if you need any help or advice with child related issues or services.

Many parents responded to the question about the Home Learning Area on the website by saying that they had forgotten about it or did not know about it. We have now changed the way it can be ac-

cessed, so you now just need to input your child's surname without a code. Please do visit the website and select the HLA tab at the top—this is the Home Learning Area where you will find lots of ideas for activities to do with your child at home.

Overwhelmingly parents have said that they would be interested in a nursery trip to a local attraction, and thanks to your suggestions we now have a whole list of possible places to go. We will be thinking about running a trip in the spring/summer months, so please watch out for information about this. Any trip will take place on a weekday and the nursery would be responsible for those children already attending on that day, but their parents would be very welcome to come along as well. We would love for all of our children to come on a trip, but any not already attending nursery on the chosen day would need to be accompanied by a parent.

If any parent forgot to complete the questionnaire and still has it at home, we would be very happy to receive your responses now as we would like to hear from as many parents as possible. But unfortunately you have missed the boat for winning the hamper!

“Overwhelmingly parents have said that they would be interested in a nursery trip to a local attraction...”

Oral Health

Some parents may be aware that the revised EYFS that was launched in September now includes a requirement for settings to promote the good oral health of children. This has been introduced following research by Public Health England that suggests that 1 in 5 children aged 5 have experienced tooth decay. The aim of the new requirement is to reduce tooth decay in children and associated hospital admissions, since having teeth removed is the most common reason for children aged 6 to 10 to be admitted to hospital.

At Carousel we discuss the importance of healthy eating and teach the children why we brush our teeth, but we will be doing this in a more deliberate way now that it forms part of the teaching framework for early years settings. Some activities we have done with the children to promote good oral health include discussions about food that is and isn't good for our teeth, and cleaning

dirt off of a big laminated tooth! We will continue to have discussions with our older children and look for fun ways to teach all children about the importance of tooth brushing.

The NHS website contains some helpful tips and advice about children's oral health. Parents should ensure their children brush their teeth twice a day, avoid giving sweets or dried fruit to children as snacks and avoid giving children any fizzy drinks. In addition, young children should be taken to the dentist regularly to get them used to the experience and allow a dentist to check their teeth. The pandemic has unfortunately made it difficult for some parents to register their child with a dentist, particularly if you have moved to a new area. If you are struggling to register your child with a dentist you could speak to your local health visiting team for advice.



Sibling Priority Places

We are very pleased to say that Carousel Day Nursery is really thriving as a business. We are getting a lot of interest from prospective parents and our spaces are being taken up fast, even into January 2023.

We have always had an informal sibling priority system at Carousel, and usually we can accommodate this with little difficulty.

However, as a result of how busy we are, we have recently experienced some

problems with existing parents telling us quite late on that they would like a space for their next child. This can make things very difficult for us if the place has already been given to a new prospective parent. We do not like to let existing customers down, but of course our reputation is at stake if we upset new customers.

We are therefore asking you as our existing parents to be very organised when it comes to arranging a place for

your second or subsequent child. It is always best to let us know that you would like a place when you are pregnant, so the space can be provisionally held for you and then everything confirmed once the baby arrives.

From now on we will be more proactive in giving out application forms to parents who we know are expecting another child. But we would appreciate it if you could communicate with us early on to avoid any disappointment.

Day Swaps

We are always happy to accommodate day swaps where we can, as we know that this can be immensely helpful for parents. Where it does not impact the nursery we are more than willing to allow children to occasionally swap days during a week and this will continue to be the case.

However, we want to give parents an advance warning that from this term onwards the nursery is extremely busy and is full on most days, which

means that it is less likely we will be able to accommodate day swaps for your child.

We will continue to be as flexible as we can, but please bear in mind that we might not be able to assist you as much as we have done in recent months, and so please bear this in mind when making your social or work plans. Thank you.





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.

Professional Photographs

Most parents should be aware that every year we arrange for a professional photography company to take individual or sibling photos of the children. This usually happens in October at the nursery, and parents are given advance warning of the date and time.

The day that the photos are taken is quite a logistical challenge for us, as one room is unavailable for the whole morning and a staff

member needs to co-ordinate the children. We organise this so that parents can purchase some professional quality photos of their children, for themselves or as gifts.

This year, quite a few parents didn't bring their child for the photos, and others didn't turn up who had said they would, which was disappointing. Please bear in mind that if interest is low again next year we may have to stop organising this.

