

Summer Term Newsletter

The summer term is a busy time at Carousel Day Nursery, with our annual family picnics, Parents' Evening and getting ready to send our pre-school children off to school. Once it does (finally!) get a bit warmer, there is lots of fun to be had with sprinklers and paddling pools in the garden!

Starting School

In a few months our pre-school children will be leaving nursery to start school. This is obviously an important transition for children, but it's also a really big milestone for parents, particularly if it is your first child going to school.

Everybody has now found out what school their child will be going to, and we hope you are pleased with what you got. Over the next few months it is now the job of you as parents and us as your child's nursery, to prepare your child for starting school.

At this time of year we really start to see the children outgrow nursery. They are still very happy here and remain challenged in their learning, but it becomes clear to us that they are ready to move on. The children start to ask questions that show they really want to learn more, they begin to grasp concepts that will be built on at school and as we hear them chat amongst themselves it simply sounds like they are getting too grown up for nursery. We are always sad to see them go, particularly if it marks the end of a relationship with a family, but at the same time we are proud to wave them off ready and equipped for their next chapter.

Getting ready for school does not mean learning to read, write and add up all in the last term of nursery. We work on the children's independence because there are certain things that children should be able to do on their own once they go to school. Good examples include being able to: wipe their bottom after a wee and a poo; do their own coat up; wipe their own nose; put their own shoes on. Of course, reception teachers and teaching assistants will help children where necessary, but the staff: child ratios at school simply don't allow for the same level of attention and assistance as children are used to receiving at home or nursery.

We will spend a lot of time over the next few months talking about going to school, to prepare the children mentally and emotionally for what will happen. As adults who have spent years in the institution of school, it's easy to forget that young children don't actually know what 'school' is. That's why it can be helpful to go and look at the building of their new school so they know where you mean when you start talking about it. Driving or walking the journey there will also be helpful in preparing them, plus it will help you work out your timings!

There are lots of books available about starting school, and we have some at nursery that we will get out to read now. It's a good idea to have conversations with your child about how their life or routine might change when they start school and what a day at school will look like. It's really important that as a parent you try to keep your own worries about your child starting school to yourself. Children really pick up on adults' emotions so it is paramount that you remain very positive about school to ensure your child feels really happy and confident about starting.

We are happy to share the names of children who will be going to the same school, so that you can talk about what friends they will be starting with. Sometimes the schools contact us to arrange a visit by the teacher to nursery, and we always accommodate this. Other schools will organise sessions at the school for the children to go to. All pre-school parents received an email with a 'School Passport' attached. Please complete your sections and return to Katharine via email by **Friday 30th June**. These passports have been designed by ECC to help with the transition into school by ensuring that information from nursery settings and parents can be shared with the schools.

Carousel Day Nursery & Pre-school

Issue 9

May 2023

Contents

- Starting School
- Nursery news
- Calling all parents!
- Phonics Fun
- Are you expecting a baby?
- Summer Events
- Some housekeeping

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Nursery news

Staffing: Kiera Mead and Hayley Gardener left our employment in the spring term, but we are very pleased to welcome to the team three new recruits: Lana Payne (EYE Level 3), Amy Morgan (Lev 3 apprentice) and Rebecca Matthews (part time).

Nursery improvements: In April we installed new windows in the Hedgehog room—these will be decorated with some beautiful artwork this term. We replaced all the rugs throughout the nursery and invested in lots of new resources for the children.

Dates for your Diary:

19th July—Parents' Evening

5th August—Lower nursery summer picnic

19th August—Upper nursery summer picnic & Pre-school graduation

Friday 1st September—last day for pre-school children.



Calling all parents!

We know that within our parent community we have a wealth of talent that, if you are willing, could be shared with the nursery to benefit the children who spend their days here.

If you have a trade then you might be able to help the nursery in a very practical way. We have a caretaker who does small jobs for us, as and when required, but when large jobs such as laying floors, replacing boilers or installing kitchens come up, we have to look for somebody to do this work. I'm sure you all know that good tradesmen can seem hard to find, especially as it is always weekend work, and it would be great to instead call upon the skilled people we have within our parent community. If you would be willing to help us in this way, please email Katharine.

We would also love to have some more parents come into the nursery to talk to the children about what they do for a living. We were visited by the police last term and the children absolutely loved it! There are obvious occupations for which a parent visit works well, such as doctors, dentists or firemen, and if you are one of those we would love to hear from you! However, it would also be great to expose the children to some different professions, so if you do a job that

you think you could talk to some 3 and 4 year olds about (and for which you maybe have some props!) please get in touch with Katharine. We would love to invite you in to talk to the children for just half an hour at a time convenient for you.

If you have any other skills or talents that you think you could share with nursery, please do contact us. Perhaps you are excellent at crochet and could make us some toys, or maybe you are a very keen gardener and have some cuttings we could plant up with the children. Perhaps you know British Sign Language and could spend some time teaching the children a few signs, or maybe you are very good at a certain sport and could come in to give them a session. Children's lives are enriched by the opportunities they have at nursery, and we are keen to expand these as much as we possibly can. Katharine is very eager to hear from you, so please drop her a line—kdilworth@carouselnursery.net.

We are also very willing to receive donations of good quality books, toys and educational resources, so if you are having a spring clean and come across anything you don't want anymore, please ask us if we could give it a home. Thank you in advance for all your help and co-operation!

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Phonics Fun

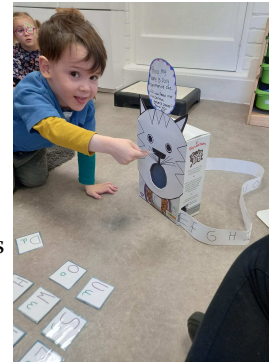
We are now in the summer term and many of the pre-school children will be leaving us in a few months to start school. During this final term we really focus in on phonics, to help the children be as prepared as possible for learning to read at school. Phonics is a way of learning to read that focuses on the sounds in a word and how these are blended together to form whole words.

The first stage of phonics, which we introduce at nursery, involves learning single letter sounds and some two letter sounds. We start doing early phonics in the Rabbit room, so by now most of the children in the pre-school who will be starting school in September can recognise all the letters of the alphabet.

During morning circle time the pre-school children now do a phonics session, where they look at a new sound every day, practice saying and air-writing it, and then practice saying it within some simple words. The children are listening really well during these sessions and it is impressive to see that at the end of the day they can still remember how to correctly say the sound, e.g. 's' is 'sssss', not 'suh'.

Phonics can get quite complicated with some strange words used by teachers, such as digraph and grapheme, and as it wasn't taught when today's parents were at school, it can seem unfamiliar and uncomfortable territory. But at its most basic phonics is about breaking a word down into its different sound parts, teaching these to the children and then teaching them how to blend these together to form words. There are plenty of resources and information online to help parents work on phonics with their children.

We also have early stage 1 phonics books at nursery that we send home with the pre-school children, along with a reading sheet to be filled in by parents. This of course isn't compulsory, but the books are very short and are a good way of introducing your child (and possibly yourself) to phonics and early reading. Please ask a member of staff if you haven't come across these and would like one.



Are you expecting a baby?

Following our Outstanding judgement by Ofsted in October last year, the nursery has become exceptionally busy. This is of course very good news for the business and we are delighted to be oversubscribed.

However, it does mean that in order to secure a place at the nursery people are now having to complete an application whilst pregnant. Parents who contact us after their baby is born are usually missing out on a place—at the moment

we have no availability until September 2024, and even then Tuesday and Wednesday are already full.

We always like to prioritise places for siblings of children currently at the nursery, as we understand you of course want your children to attend the same nursery. However, this does mean that we need parents to tell us as soon as possible that they are expecting a second child—letting us know after your 12 week scan (or before if you

wish) is not too soon.

We appreciate that for some this may seem premature, but the reality is that in order to secure a place you must sign up very early. This is especially the case if you are looking for a place on a Tuesday-Thursday, which are the busiest days in the nursery. We really do not like to be in the position where we cannot accommodate existing customers, so please don't delay in letting us know if you are expecting.

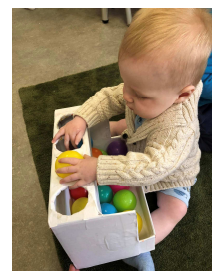
Summer Events

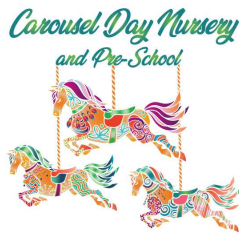
The summer is a busy time at Carousel as we host Parents' Evening and both family summer picnics. You have received an email about these events, so please do RSVP to Katharine about the picnics.

It is really important that one or two parents come to Parents' Evening. This is a great opportunity to talk to your child's key person about their development and how they are getting on at nursery. Your child's key person will have matters to discuss with

you, but it is also a good opportunity for you to ask any questions you might have about their relationships, learning or generally how they are doing.

The summer picnics are lovely events we host each year in order to help parents and staff get to know each other a little better. We also have the pre-school graduation towards the end of the upper nursery picnic to give our oldest children a proper send off before starting school.





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 (babies), Hedgehogs (toddlers), Rabbits (2-3 year olds) 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.

Some housekeeping

Parking: Our driveway has space for three cars. When you pull onto the drive, please do not take up any more than one space. It is very frustrating for parents waiting in the road to be looking at a car parked very inconsiderately across the driveway. Please be particularly mindful of this if you have a large car, as these often seem to be the worst culprits. Also, please do not leave your engine running whilst parked on the driveway. This is terrible for the environment and for the developing lungs of the very young children coming in and out of our building. Regardless of how quickly you think you might get back to your car, to leave the engine idling is unacceptable.

Footwear: Please ensure that your child is wearing suitable shoes for nursery. The best shoes are trainers or similar with easy fastenings. Laces are very unsuitable as

young children cannot tie them and they frequently come undone. We also have a number of children coming to nursery in Crocs—these are easy for children to slip on and off, but they are not very practical for running around in the garden. As the summer arrives, please note that flip flops or sandals without proper support are not appropriate—the children run around a lot in the garden and will trip or hurt their feet in these types of shoes.

Spare clothes: We would like to remind parents that all children, even those in the pre-school, need to have at least one change of clothes in their nursery bag. Children get messy, wet or have toileting accidents and we don't have a huge stock of spare clothes to dress them in. Please ensure your child's bag is fully stocked every day they are in.

