

March 2017

Newsletter

Toy Box Day Nursery & Pre-School

Dear Parents/Carers,

Welcome to our March newsletter bringing you up to date with events here at Toy Box over the coming month. Let's hope that March sees the beginning of better weather with a bit more sunshine and brighter evenings. We live in hope!

Pre-School and Baby Room Activities

Throughout the month the babies have had lots of lovely messy exploratory play with cooked spaghetti. Staff placed the cooked spaghetti in a large tray and let the babies loose. They thoroughly enjoy feeling around and generally creating a lovely mess for the staff to clean up.

Other activities enjoyed by the babies included large scale body painting and exploring new sensory bags which staff have recently created.

The Pre-School have also had lots of fun and excitement with Superhero hunts in the garden, exploring different textures which included porridge oats and shaving foam as well as threading bears and webs.

Our Rhyme of the Month for the Babies is: "Miss Polly"
Our Rhyme of the Month for the Pre-School is: "Wiggly Woo"
Our Book of the Month for the Pre-School is: "Super Worm"

St Patrick's Day Celebrations – Dress in Green – Friday 17th March

To celebrate St Patrick's Day on Friday 17th March all staff and children who would normally attend nursery on a Friday are invited to come to nursery wearing something green.

Julie, our cook, will be serving Irish Stew for lunch followed by a good hearty Irish Rice Pudding. There will also be Irish Soda Bread, which they will have with a variety of toppings for late snack. Other activities planned for the day include listening to Irish music, trying out Irish Dancing as well as making Shamrock biscuits and greetings cards.

Comic Relief and Red Nose Day – Make Your Face Funny for Money & Sponsored Dance

Monday 20th March – Friday 24th March

Red Nose Day will once again be with us on March 24th. In preparation for the day staff have been busy planning fundraising events which will be fun and accessible for all the children.

Starting on Monday 20th March both children and staff will take part in a sponsored “Silly Dance” throughout the week.

On Friday 24th March the children and staff will attempt to raise funds by “Making their faces funny for money”. All children who would usually attend nursery on the day are invited to come to nursery with a “funny face”. I’m sure each child will come up with their own suggestions at home as to how they want to look. However, should you be struggling for inspiration, something as simple as painting your child’s face, wearing a wig, wobbly glasses or even a silly moustache will produce the desired effect.

If you are still struggling for ideas please speak to a member of staff and they will be delighted to help with suggestions.

The children will also be baking lots of tasty treats throughout the week which will of course be on sale in the entrance lobby. A donation box will be strategically placed in the entrance lobby to collect all of your loose change.

Sponsor forms are attached to the Newsletter. Please help and encourage your child to collect as many sponsors as possible so we can raise a decent sum of money for this worthy cause.

Iranian New Year March 21st

As we have some children here at nursery who are of Iranian descent we thought it would be nice for them if we celebrate their festival here at nursery on March 21st.

Throughout the day the children will listen to Persian music, try out Persian dancing, decorate eggs and make Nooruz greetings cards.

Easter Bonnet Competition

As usual Toy Box will be hosting our Easter Bonnet Competition in the lead up to Easter. Every year the entries become more and more imaginative and this year I’m sure will be no exception. However, if you are a new parent/ carer and need a little help with ideas, please see any member of staff and they will be delighted to help inspire you.

Judging will take place on the afternoon of Thursday 20th April. In order to ensure that judging is totally fair and impartial a member of staff from the SOS (Out of School Club) will pick a winner from each age group.

Three winners will be awarded a prize but every child will get a little something, just for taking part.

The results will be announced in our May newsletter.

Exclusion Procedure for Illnesses

For the benefit of our new parent/ carers and a reminder for our existing parent/ carers I am attaching a copy of our Exclusion Procedure for Illnesses.

This document is from the Department of Health and is used in schools and nurseries. In order to minimise the spread of infection throughout the nursery it is very important the we as a setting and parent/ carers adhere to the guidelines.

If you need further clarification on any of the guidelines please speak to Helen and she will be delighted to answer any queries you may have.

Fees Increase

We have not had a fees increase here at Toy Box for the past year. Unfortunately, with the implementation of both the National Living Wage, the government's Auto Enrolment Scheme (work place pensions) and another wages increase this April we are left with no option but to increase our fees.

We are very proud to say that our staff already get paid in excess of the living wage, but in order to maintain their differential they will be getting a wages increase in April. Already we have had notification from some of our suppliers that their prices are set to increase in April as well.

As usual we have made every effort to keep the fees increase to a minimum. We are also taking this as an opportunity to simplify our fees structure and have the same price for all age groups. As well as bringing us into line with other settings in the area it also makes invoicing simpler.

Therefore as from the 1st of April a half day session will cost £27.00, a full day session will cost £47.00 and a full week session will cost £205.00. These prices apply to all age groups.

If any parent/ carer needs further clarification on the fees increase please speak to Helen and she will be happy to answer any queries you may have.

Staff Member of the Month

The winner of staff member of the month for February is Kylie Madden

Kylie took over leadership of the Baby Room from Helen when Anna went on maternity leave and is doing a sterling job.

Well done and congratulations to Kylie who will now receive a £20 gift voucher of her choice.

Thank you also to all parents/ carers who took the time to vote. It means a lot to all the staff that their efforts are recognised and appreciated.

In order to make voting more convenient we routinely attach a voting slip to the newsletter each month. Parent/ carers can either print this slip off at home and bring it into nursery, or fill it in online and email it to the office so we can pop it into the basket for you.

Staff News

The only staff news this month is the arrival of Anna's little baby daughter on the 14th February. Her name is Layla Rose and she weighted 9lbs 9ozs at birth. Is it any wonder Anna was struggling towards the end of her pregnancy!!!!!!

Congratulations to Anna and all the family. We wish them all the very best.

Birthdays

Throughout March we would like to wish a big "Happy Birthday" to the following children.

Bradley H - 2 years old
Jack C - 2 years old

Lillian - 4 years old
Melissa - 4 years old
Joshua - 4 years old

Dates for your Diary

World Book Day Dress-Up Day - Thursday 2nd March
St Patrick's Day - Friday 17th March
Comic Relief and Red Nose Day - Monday 20th March to Friday

And Finally

I'm sure that just about everybody will have heard by now about the 30 hours "free" childcare being introduced in September 2017. At the time this announcement was made politicians were so busy trying to win the election that they made the promise without fully thinking it through. Nurseries are supposed to be ready to roll this out in September but unfortunately we are still awaiting final instructions and information as to how all this is going to happen and what the final funding figure will be.

Rather than waiting any longer we have decided to carry out a survey to try to get some idea of how many parent/ carers would be interested in accessing the full 30 hours, should we decide to offer it.

Attached to the newsletter parent/ carers will find a Survey Form which contains all the information we have so far. Please read through the form, fill it in and return the completed form to nursery ASAP. Once we have all the results back it will help us with our future planning. Please do not just put the form to one side and forget about it. We have a mammoth task ahead in trying to prepare as much as we can, without all the relevant information from the government.

For parent/ carers information we have also registered for Tax Free Childcare, as we were told to do. We still haven't been told how that is going to work either so we have some fun interesting times ahead. Please be patient and bear with us. As soon as we have all the relevant information on the 30 hours and how the Tax Free Childcare is going to work we will let you know.

As always a big thank you to all parents/ carers for your continuing support. All your suggestions and input are always welcome and taken seriously. If, however, you do have any queries or worries about any aspect of your child/ children's care or daily routine while at nursery please do not hesitate to speak to Helen and she will be delighted to address any queries you may have.

Noreen, Helen and all the staff at Toy Box Day Nursery