

## WELCOME TO THE FIRST STEP PLAYGROUP

This playgroup is part of the same company as Play2learn in Cranford. The company director is Annette Kirk, and First Step playgroup is managed by Yasmin Mohamed.

You are joining a Playgroup with an enthusiastic team of dedicated staff, parents and children. We have an excellent reputation built up over the years for working in partnership with parents, children and their families. The service that we provide is constantly reviewed and updated to provide you and your children with quality care and education.

### Ethos and Approach

For many children, Playgroup will be their first time away from the family home, which can be confusing and strange for both the children and parents. Therefore, at First Step Playgroup, we aim to make the environment reflect what a home would look like. There is a home corner, we provide a cosy and inviting space that reflects a real home environment. There is a coffee table with a basket of books for children to choose from and enjoy. The area includes baby role-play resources, a small kitchen for imaginative play, and equipment such as a cot, highchair, oven, washing machine, and highchair, so children can engage in caring and nurturing role-play experiences, as well as lots of books to choose from. We add items that you would find at home, such as picture frames, lamps, paintings and ornaments, which make the environment more inviting.

We use some aspects of the Curiosity Approach, where areas are set up to stimulate children's interest, for example, an area with cars, people, wooden blocks, and drawing materials, as well as dressing up in hard hats and high visibility jackets. This encourages children to go and investigate and develop their play with the help of a supportive adult.

We believe that all children are capable learners, and to support this, we use real items at First Step Playgroup. When the children have snacks or lunch, they use ceramic plates, glass cups, and metal cutlery. In this way, they learn how to use real items from the world we live in, as well as learning that items can break if you are not careful! They are at all times given support by our experienced team, who role model how to use these items correctly. We have real items throughout the setting to reflect their lives at home and give all the children practice skills which will help them outside of the nursery and for life.

We aim to build close partnerships with parents and the community by involving you in workshops and special events, and building a close relationship with you throughout your time at First Step Playgroup. We plan for each child's development by observing their interest and then extending their learning by offering activities that interest them. All children are observed on a daily basis by each practitioner, which helps them plan for their next steps and interests whilst they are playing alongside them. This approach allows children to become highly involved in activities supported by a qualified key person.

We also take a very creative approach to learning with lots of activities available every day, such as painting, sticking and glueing, playdough, clay, gloop play, music, dancing, and drawing. In this way, the children are able to express themselves and have fun at the same time.

The environment is designed to be calming with this approach, using muted colours and lots of mirrors so the children can see themselves. The equipment consists of natural resources that look beautiful and last a long time.

The curriculum we use is the Early Years Foundation Stage, which all settings must follow who are registered with Ofsted. The curriculum sets out learning outcomes for children aged 3 months to 5 years and is the same curriculum used in school nurseries and reception classes. We believe that the most important factor to enable your child to be successful both academically as well as socially is that they are confident and secure individuals. This is why we concentrate on the emotional health and well-being of all the children who attend First Step Playgroup. Therefore, a lot of time is spent on building relationships with parents, key workers, and the other children. Once children are happy and settled, we are then able to build on what they know and extend their knowledge.

We strongly believe that children need to know how to take part in playgroup activities, to make friends, and to have social skills such as please and thank you. This will serve them well, not just in school but in life in general. Children also need to be able to communicate what they would like, and we support their emergent language with signing. This is especially important for those children with English as a second language, as it allows them to take part and not get frustrated. In order to encourage children's language, we sing nursery rhymes, read books, look at words around us, and spend time speaking and listening to them.

### **Outdoor Play & Forest Schools**

This is a vital part of your child's learning and development, and many children learn a lot more outside, where they can make bigger movements and can be much louder. Every day, the children will be encouraged to go outside, where they will have access to the same curriculum as inside. They will be encouraged to take part in energetic physical play, which aids their physical as well as mental development; this will include physical nursery rhymes, games, obstacle courses, and bike riding. Children will be encouraged to learn by moving around and accessing all the activities in a more physical way. Therefore, please make sure that your child has appropriate clothing, e.g. coat, hat and gloves in the winter and sun hats and sun cream in the summer. Outdoor play is part of the curriculum and is a legal requirement; it allows children to experience the weather and build up their natural immunity to everyday coughs and colds. Also, children need exposure to 15 minutes of vitamin D a day, and this is achieved by going outside and running around.

## **Forest Schools**

Every child will be able to take part in Forest Schools, which takes place in the Local Park and forested area at the back of the setting. In the park, the children can explore the forested area, the paths, walkways, and river, and in the forested area, the trees, plants, and wildlife. There are high staff ratios of 1:3 with two qualified practitioners; Halime is the Forest Schools Leader, and she is supported by Yasmin, who is a qualified Forest School Leader. The children are encouraged to be independent, to challenge themselves and take managed risks. The activities are linked to the curriculum and are included in the group planning. The nursery provides all-in-one coats and wellington boots so that all children can take part. Please come out with us to a session of Forest Schools to see why your child enjoys it so much!

All the staff at First Step Playgroup are skilled practitioners who want to work with you in order for your child to succeed. So, please share with us your child's successes and interests so we can plan for their learning together.

## **Contact us**

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## **Keeping in touch:**

Please make sure we have up-to-date contact numbers for you.

First Step 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 its local community; and
- offer children and their parents a service which promotes equality and values diversity.

As a member of First Step, 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 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 know and can do.
- has a personal key person who makes sure your child makes satisfying progress.
- is in a nursery which sees you as a partner in helping your child to learn and develop

It is vital that all the children at First Step Playgroup are happy and involved in the activities that we plan for them. Therefore, we observe and assess children regularly, when they first join, and then either on their birthday or 6 months later (whichever is sooner). You will be contacted by your key person to talk about how your child is progressing and ask what you think and if there is anything you would like them to do to support your child.

- Children will take part in a small group activity during their time at Playgroup, which is led by an adult. Every child will be encouraged to take part, and the activity is planned so that the child's senses are used to encourage deep learning. Activities may be based around a story, nursery rhymes, letters, and sounds or music.



First Step Playgroup has been accredited with the Let's Talk Together award, which means that all the team members are highly skilled in supporting children with their language development. Language is important as it forms the basis for interactions with other people, to be able to tell someone about our thoughts, needs, and experiences. It is so important because

children need to make friends. At the setting, we have an Early Years Lead Language professional (Nirmal Purba/ Yasmin Mohamed) who ensures that the setting is a communication-friendly environment. All team members spend time talking and, more importantly, listening to children, taking part in their play, extending their language, and developing their imaginary play. Each child is tracked to ensure they are reaching developmental milestones, and extra support is given to those children who need it and on occasion, a referral to speech and language, with the parent's permission. Those children who are very able are encouraged to increase their vocabulary and understanding of how language works. To support Let's Talk Together, we use

signing and visual clues alongside verbal language. We spend time reading stories using props so the children can become involved, and we sing many different rhymes, as this helps to develop vocabulary in a fun way. Parents are involved by sending rhymes and stories home, and each key person will share individual planning with parents that will support language development. In turn, parents share what their child has done at home and how their child

expresses themselves, so we can work in partnership.

## FOREST SCHOOLS

Every child will have the opportunity to take part in Forest Schools throughout the year. It is an opportunity for children to experience the outdoors in all weathers and to see the changes that occur in nature and enjoy the freedom of being outside. First Step Playgroup provides all-in-one weather suits and wellies for each child, and we ask that parents provide elasticised warm trousers, layers of clothing, along with hats, gloves and scarves when appropriate. Forest schools are a vital part of our curriculum, and many of the children learn better in the outdoors, have better behaviour and learn how to take supervised risks. The learning opportunities are many, and we have a high ratio of staff to children when we go out. We also offer family sessions where parents and carers are asked to come along with us to a forest school session, so you can take part with your child and experience the joy of forest schools.

## HEALTHY SETTING

First Step playgroup has achieved its healthy setting status and is one of the first to do this in the Borough. We are very proud to have this award, as it shows our commitment to ensuring that every child is healthy at First Step Playgroup. Healthy setting covers all areas of a child's health, such as the food that is provided (please ask to see our rotating menu for each season), the amount of physical exercise your child gets – please ask about **Physical Literacy** and their emotional well-being. We also encourage children to brush their teeth and have a trained tooth champion at the setting. Throughout the year, there are opportunities for parents and children to take part in healthy lifestyle activities, and we have a mental health and wellbeing lead at the nursery who is available to support children, families and the staff.

## Opening Hours

The Playgroup is open term-time only, and we are closed for all bank holidays. We are open 5 days each week between 8:30 am-3 pm.

We offer the following types of care between the following times:

Full Day Care.

We provide care and education for young children between the ages of

18 months-5 years.

## The curriculum provided by First Step Playgroup

Children start to learn about the world around them from the moment they are born. The care and education offered by First Step Playgroup help 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 children between the ages of 18 months and 5 years, the nursery provides a curriculum for the foundation stage of education. This curriculum is set out in a document, published by the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority and the Department for Education and Skills, which is called the Early Years Foundation Stage. The nursery follows this guidance.

The guidance divides children's learning and development into seven areas: These are divided into the three prime areas:

- Communication and Language (CL)
- Physical Development (PD)
- Personal, Social and Emotional Development (PSED)

PSED is the area which we concentrate on initially, as we have found that many of our children and their families have been affected by COVID-19. This has meant that some children have not been able to socialise with other children or mix with many adults other than their parents. Meaning that many of our children have needed additional support when settling into the Playgroup. It is so important that every child builds a close relationship with their key person, and once they are happy and secure, they can explore and begin to learn.

Communication is also at the heart of all learning, and your children will experience high-quality interactions with all the staff, take part in small group times where a rhyme or book is shared, and they will be able to take part in a sensory way. They are encouraged to enjoy turning the pages in a book, singing nursery rhymes, and talking to each other.

Children are given access to the outdoors every day and take part in Forest Schools every week, this is to support their physical development and their love of the outdoors. Some children learn better outside, and they can also learn about the world around them as well as practise their running, jumping and climbing.

The other 4 areas of learning are:

Specific areas of:

- Literacy
- Mathematics
- Understanding the World

- Expressive arts and design

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

For each stage, the guidance describes the stages through which children are likely to pass. First Step Playgroup uses these stages to help trace each child's progress and to enable us to provide the right activities to help all of the children to achieve.

### **Communication and Language:**

The development of children's spoken language underpins all 7 areas of learning and development. Children need many interactions between themselves and with adults, which build the foundations for language and cognitive development. Building a language-rich environment is vital where practitioners comment on what children are doing, add new vocabulary, read books and poems, and listen to children.

## **5**

### **Personal, social, and emotional development**

Children's PSED is crucial for them to lead a happy and healthy life, and it is fundamental for their cognitive development. Important attachments are formed that shape their social world. Strong, warm, and supportive relationships are developed. So that children learn to understand their own feelings and those of others. Children are supported to manage their own emotions and develop a positive sense of self; they learn to wait for their turn and direct their attention as necessary. Through adult modelling and guidance, they will learn to look after their bodies, including healthy eating, and manage personal hygiene needs independently.

### **Physical Development**

Physical development is vital in children's all-around development, enabling them to pursue happy, healthy, and active lives. Gross and fine motor skills are developed starting with sensory explorations and the development of a child's strength, coordination, and positional awareness. Gross motor skills provide the foundation for developing healthy bodies and social and emotional well-being. Fine motor control and precision help with hand-eye coordination, which is later linked to early literacy.

### **Literacy**

It is very crucial that children develop a lifelong love of reading. Reading consists of two dimensions: language for comprehension and word reading. Language comprehension (necessary for both reading and writing) starts from birth. It only develops when adults talk with children about the world around them and the books (stories and non-fiction) they read



with them and enjoy rhymes, poems, and songs together. Skilled word reading, taught later, involves both the speedy working out of the pronunciation of unfamiliar printed words (decoding) and the speedy recognition of familiar printed words. Writing involves transcription (spelling and handwriting) and composition (articulating ideas and structuring them into speech, before writing).

## **Mathematics**

Developing a strong grounding in numbers is essential so that all children develop the necessary building blocks to excel mathematically. Children should be able to count confidently and develop a deep understanding of the numbers to 10, the relationship between them, and the patterns within those numbers. This is achieved by providing frequent and varied opportunities to build and apply this understanding, such as counting small pebbles. In addition, children need rich opportunities to develop their spatial reasoning skills across all areas of mathematics, including shape, space, and measurement. It's important that the children develop a 'have a go' attitude and not be afraid to make mistakes.

## **Understanding the world**

This involves supporting children to make sense of their physical world and their community. This is achieved by broadening their experiences, such as visiting the park, libraries, and museums and meeting important members of our community, e.g. police officers, nurses and firefighters. Listening to a broad range of stories will also foster their understanding of our culturally, socially, technologically, and ecologically diverse world.

## **Expressive Arts and Design**

The area of children's artistic and cultural awareness supports their imagination and creativity. Children need regular opportunities to engage with the arts, enabling them to explore and play with a wide range of media and materials.

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. First Step Playgroup uses the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) guidelines 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 EYFS has been used to decide what equipment to provide and how to provide it.



## Working together for your children

Playgroup has a high ratio of adults to children in the setting. This 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.

There is a list of staff member names and qualifications in the entrance hall and on our website. We have an Early Years professional in our setting, Annette Kirk. This qualification is the same level as a teacher (level 6). The EYP is a specialist in early years education and leads the team in improving and reflecting on practice in the nursery to ensure that all the children reach their potential through appropriate activities.

First Step recognises parents as the first and most important educators of their children. All staff are seen as co-workers working with you in providing care and education for your child. There are many ways in which parents take part in making the nursery 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.
- taking part in events and informal discussions about the activities and curriculum provided by playgroup.
- joining in community activities in which the playgroup takes part; and
- building friendships with other parents in the playgroup.

## Parent Helpers/Parent Champion

If you would like to help at the playgroup, please let Yasmin or your key person know. Helping at the playgroup enables you to see what the day-to-day life of the playgroup is like, and it enables you to join in by helping the children to get the best out of their activities. If you would like to be a parent champion, this would mean that you helped to support other parents in areas they are interested in learning about to support their children. Your role is to find out what our parents would like us to do, events to put on or activities we could do together. Also, to encourage parents to join in on Christmas, World Book Day, and Family Forest Schools. We will support you by offering internal training, and you will be able to put these skills on your CV and use us as a reference.

## Joining in

You can offer to take part by offering to share your own interests and skills with the children. Parents have visited the playgroup to play the drums for the children, dance to traditional Indian music, and show the children their collection of shells.

Do feel free to arrange to drop in on the playgroup if you would like to see it at work or to speak with the staff.

## Key Persons

The playgroup has a key person system. This means that each member of staff has a group of children for whom she/he is particularly responsible. Your child's key person will be the person who works with you to make sure that what the nursery provides is right for your child's particular needs and interests. When your child first starts at the playgroup, she/he will help your child to settle, and throughout your child's time at the playgroup, she/he will help your child to benefit from the playgroup activities. If your key person is not at the playgroup on a day your child attends, then a "buddy" key person will look after your child and follow their individual planning and interests. The name of this person will be given to you if this should happen.

## Records of Achievement

The Playgroup keeps a record of achievement for each child in the 'All About Me' journals, which are online using a system called EyLog. They use a tablet to record pictures and short videos as well as written observations. These observations are then emailed to parents/carers so you can see what your child is doing and how they are progressing each time an observation is made. Parents can also contribute to their child's record by commenting on the observations and adding their own observations. In this way, we can truly work together to develop each child to their potential.

This is a secure system as EyLog uses the Secure Locked with Key (SSL) to encrypt all communication between the server and the tablets. All data is stored on secure cloud-based servers in data centres located in the UK. All data is regularly backed up onto redundant systems. Playgroup staff need a PIN number to access the tablets, ensuring that nobody else will be able to access them. The tablets are locked down secure tablet devices with no access to Facebook, emails, etc. Parents also need a PIN to access their child's emails from their email address, which will be sent to you.

We also use WhatsApp to send photographs of your children, especially when they first start and they are settling. Then, on special occasions, when it is your child's spotlight month or if there is a WOW moment. All the practitioners want to spend as much time as possible interacting and following your child's interests rather than taking lots of photos. In this way,

your child will receive all the support they need to progress.

## The Playgroup Timetable and Routines

First Step Playgroup believes that care and education are equally important in the experience which we offer children. The routines and activities that make up the nursery session/day are provided in ways that:

- help each child feel that she/he is a valued member of the Playgroup.
- ensure the safety of each child.
- help children to gain from the social experience of being part of a group, and
- provide children with opportunities to learn and help them to value learning.

### **The session**

The Playgroup organises its sessions so that the children can choose from - and work at - a range of activities and, in doing so, build up their ability to select and work through a task to its completion. The children are also helped and encouraged to take part in adult-led small and large group activities, which introduce them to new experiences and help them to gain new skills, as well as help them to learn to work with others. These activities include Letters and Sounds and a package called Playing and Learning to Socialise (PALS). Along with Multi-Sensory Group Time (MSGT), where the children take part in small group activities which involve using many of their senses, so it is a deep learning experience. We also have small communication groups to support those children who need a little more support with their language development. Outdoor activities contribute to children's health, their physical development and their knowledge of the world around them. The children have the opportunity - and are encouraged - to take part in outdoor child-chosen and adult-led activities, as well as those provided in the indoor playroom.

If your child attends for a  $\frac{1}{2}$  day or pre-school hours, they will receive the same access to the curriculum as the full-time children. The day is structured so that the morning and afternoon sessions offer similar activities.

### Arrival

When you arrive at the Playgroup, please ring the bell at the front. A member of staff will then come and open the door to let your child in. Please **DO NOT** let your child open the door, and do not let anybody else in. This is important for your child's safety. When you come to pick your child up, please ring the bell, and a member of staff will open the door and then get your child.

We encourage your children to walk to the Playgroup to keep them fit, but also so they can learn about road safety. Therefore, please do not bring a pushchair/buggy to the Playgroup. If you would like your child to cycle or use a scooter to come to nursery, you must take them with you when you leave, as we have no room to store them, and the entrance becomes dangerous.

## Food and Drinks

When you join First Step Playgroup, you will be asked to provide a piece of fruit every day for their snack. It would be very helpful if you could bring a bag of fruit, e.g. apples, pears, bananas, at the beginning of the week, which we can give to your child each day. Snack time is a very important part of the day. The children help prepare the fruit by washing it and then cutting it into slices. There are many opportunities to use mathematical language, such as half, big, small, as well as using all the senses to explore the fruit.

Your child will be offered milk or water throughout the session, which they will pour for themselves. We ask that you do not bring in water bottles, as we would like them to practice the skills of pouring a drink as well as drinking from a cup. We also ask that you do not give your child chewing gum when they come inside the playgroup, as they could choke while they are running around.

Playgroup doesn't offer lunch; the children need to bring healthy packed lunches and snacks. Annette has a BA in Hospitality Management, and the setting supports healthy eating habits. Please let us know of your child's preferences or dislikes, and we would welcome any support in cooking activities with the children. Please refer to the healthy packed lunch leaflet.

## Allergies

When you join First Step Playgroup, you will be asked on your application form if your child has any allergies. If they do, please let us know at that time. The information we will need is:

- What triggers the allergy
- How severe is it
- Do we need to give medication
- Will we need specialist training to administer the medicine
- Who we should contact in an emergency

This will mean we will be prepared before your child attends the nursery. In some cases, there may be a delay; specialist training, etc., is required before your child can join. You will also be asked to take a walk around the nursery to help identify any potential hazards, and a list of activities will be discussed with you to see if they could trigger the allergy. This will all be recorded.

We also list all the ingredients in our menus (at the front entrance) with the week's menu, which lists all the potential allergies recommended by the Food Standards Agency. These allergies are celery, gluten, crustaceans, eggs, fish, lupin, milk, molluscs, mustard, nuts, peanuts, sesame seeds, soya and sulphur dioxide. For more information, visit [food.gov.uk/allergy](http://food.gov.uk/allergy).

## Jewellery

For your child's safety, we ask that you do not send them to the Playgroup wearing jewellery as it may get caught whilst they are playing. Especially dangly earrings and necklaces, also bracelets can get caught very easily. We cannot take responsibility for any

losses.

### **Free Play:**

The children may move around between activities, spending as much time as they like at each activity and returning to it as often as they like. These activities are planned by Your child's key person will share this with you so that you can help support your child at home.

### **Snacks and Meals**

The Playgroup makes snacks and meals a social time at which children and adults eat together. In this way, they learn healthy eating habits and independence skills.

### **Outdoor Play**

We will encourage your children to go outside every day, as this is an important part of the Early Years Foundation Stage. Also, they need to get vitamin D to keep them healthy, which is only available from the sun through 15 minutes of outdoor play. Therefore, please ensure that your child has a coat and appropriate outdoor wear, e.g. gloves, hats, etc., which will enable them to have outdoor experiences which are fun and teach them about the world around them. We are a physical setting and will promote at least 45 minutes of physical activity during a three-hour session, which may be outdoors in the Forest or inside.

### **Home Time**

A member of staff will open the door when they see you, your child's name will be called, and then they will be let out one at a time to make sure they are going home with the correct person, and so that the exit does not get too crowded. Please could you make sure that your child's coats, hats, and bags are clearly labelled. If someone else is collecting your child, please let us know when you drop them off so we can record it. Your child will not be allowed to go home with anybody who is not on your application form (we must see them first) or has not been recorded in the parent's communication book. If you are unable to collect your child, please call us to let us know who will be coming in your place. If we do not know them, then you will have to provide a password. Please give us this password when you phone, so we can then ask the person coming to collect your child. If the passwords match, we will allow your child to go home with them.

### **Collecting your Child**

Please be on time for collecting your child, as it can be very distressing for the children who are left behind after all of their friends have gone home. If you are running late/stuck in traffic, etc, please call us to let us know when you will arrive. If you are late, then late charges will be incurred. Please refer to your contract. We will try to contact you by the numbers on your application form and your emergency contacts, but if we cannot, then we will have to contact Social Care, who will look after your child until you can be contacted.

## Walking to the Playgroup

Once your child is steady on their feet, please could you encourage them to walk to the Playgroup. In this way, you will be supporting your child's physical development, road safety skills and their vocabulary as you can walk and talk on your way. We cover road safety in our curriculum so that the children become aware of how to behave near the roads, and by walking to the Playgroup, they get to practice this. Pushchairs **cannot** be left outside the Playgroup as they cause a hazard. Only children with developmental needs can leave their pushchair (please ask)

## Hugs not Phones

When you enter the Playgroup, we ask that you (and/or your child or children) not use a mobile phone. Your child is so excited to see you and share what they have been doing, so please take the time to listen to them.

## Policies

Copies of the nursery policies are available on our website, and some will have been covered at induction when your child starts. The Playgroup policies help us to make sure that the service provided by the Playgroup is a high-quality one and that being a member of the nursery is an enjoyable and beneficial experience for each child and her/his parents.

## Special needs

At First Step Playgroup, we support children who come into our setting with a range of needs. Along with this, we monitor all our children, and should they need extra support such as language development, behaviour or physical ability, we can help. Our Special Educational Needs Co-coordinator is Sandeep Kaur, who works with the Hounslow Early Education Team to support children. Parents will always be asked if they are happy for us to refer their child to them, and our main contact is Philipa Hubb/ Sarah Hutton.

Together we help to identify and monitor children who are having difficulties, provide advice and practical strategies and make suggestions on resources and activities so we can include all children. A child may be given a Targeted Support Plan (TSP) to support them in a particular area. This will be discussed with you at a meeting, and you will be given copies and suggestions on how you can help.

As part of the playgroup policy to make sure that its provision meets the needs of each child, we take into account any special needs which a child may have. The Playgroup works to the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage and the disability discrimination act (DDA) 2010, the Special Educational Needs and disability code of Practice: 0 to 25 years 2014, and the Equal Opportunities Act 2010.

If you would like a copy of our Policy Supporting Children with Special Educational Needs, please let us know, and we can email this to you and answer any questions you may have.

We are an inclusive setting, and we take seriously any complaints related to the Equality Act



2010, in particular discrimination, harassment or victimisation of disabled children. The setting takes seriously its duty to promote equality of opportunity for disabled children

### **Payment of Charges**

- Payment is to be made on the 1<sup>st</sup> of every month in cash or through bank transfer.
- Fees are calculated on the age of your child when they have their birthday. The change in their fee will be made in the following term, in line with the funding.
- Fees must still be paid if children are absent without notice for a short period of time. If your child has to be absent for a long period of time, talk to Yasmin. For your child to keep her/his place at the Playgroup, you must pay the fees on time, or we must receive nursery education funding for your child. You will be asked to sign a contract which outlines all the details.
- Please do not take your child on holiday during term time unless there is an emergency. If your child is funded by the London Borough of Hounslow will not pay your child's fees unless they attend, and settings are audited frequently to monitor all children's attendance. If there is a family emergency that requires you to take your child out of the Playgroup during term time, you must speak to the Manager, Yasmin, who will contact the borough to see if this can be authorised. If you take your child out without authorisation, then you may lose your child's place. Alternatively, you can pay for the weeks you are away, and on return, the setting will reapply for the remaining amount of funding. All fees must be paid in advance if you have permission to take a holiday from the manager/deputy. If you do not inform us, we will try and contact you to find out what is happening. If we cannot reach you or your emergency contacts, then your place will be given to the next child on the waiting list.
- Fees may be given to Sandeep or Yasmin
- We do charge full fees for Bank Holidays (closed)
- If you ask at short notice, less than 2 days in advance, to increase the number of hours for your child, you will be charged a flat rate of £14 per hour. If you are able to give 2 days or more in advance, then the hourly rate will be £10 per hour if we have the availability or the normal daily, half-day or preschool hours. This will need to be paid for on the day or, if possible, before your child attends. Additional hours for a set time are at the Playgroup's discretion.
- Please note that it is unacceptable not to pay your child's fees. If you fall behind more than 1 week, please make an appointment with the Manager so we can try and sort the



problem out. Please do not put us in the uncomfortable position where you are asked to leave because you have not paid your fees. Refer to your contract for the non-payment of fees.

- We might ask the parents to provide food during official festivals to celebrate with the children approximately four times a year.

**If, for reasons beyond the Playgroup's control, we must close, i.e. no water, heating, or polling day, then the fees will still apply and there will be no refunds.**

### **Sickness and Absence**

- Please inform the Playgroup on the first day of your child's illness. If we do not hear from you, we will call to see what is happening. If we are unable to contact you within 1 week, then your place may be offered to another child. If your child has had sickness or diarrhoea, then please do not send them back to nursery until 48 hours after their last episode. Please refer to our sickness and absence policy. Please refer to the absence letter that was covered at induction and is available on our website [www.firststepheston.com](http://www.firststepheston.com)
- The Playgroup does not usually administer Calpol for children, especially if they have a temperature or flu-like symptoms; however, an exception may be when a child is teething. Please inform your key person if you have given your child Calpol before attending Playgroup. We are able to administer prescribed antibiotics to children after they have been given at home for 48 hours. You will be asked to fill out medical consent forms for all medications.

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- If your child has chicken pox, please do not send them back to the Playgroup until the last spot has scabbed over.

### **Early Years Entitlement**

- Children who turn three years old are eligible to claim the Nursery Education Grant for the term following their third birthday. This covers up to 15 hours per week. Some families may be able to access the 30-hour free childcare in line with the same dates. (Please see our website for more details and the notice board at the entrance)
- If your child turns three after the 31<sup>st</sup> of March, i.e. April, May, June, July, or August, they will not receive the education grant at all.
- Some children may be entitled to 2-year funding or 9 months' funding. You will need to

apply for this online and give the code to the Manager; she will need to check that this code is valid before your child can start.

### **Suspension and Termination**

- We may choose to terminate or suspend your contract immediately if fees have not been paid.
- You have breached any of the terms and conditions
- Parents/Guardians show unacceptable behaviour towards staff.
- Your child's behaviour is unacceptable, and we feel this is putting others in danger, including children and staff
- Your child is suffering from contagious infections, which can be passed on, e.g. conjunctivitis
- You may terminate the contract at any time; however, you must give us at least 4 weeks' notice in writing (not including when we are closed for termly holidays). This also applies if you decrease your child's hours.
- We suffer an event that cannot be mutually resolved.

### **Holidays:**

We ask that you do not take your child/children out of Playgroup during the term, as there are plenty of opportunities to go when we are closed for the school holidays. This is because it affects your child's learning, and they are often unsettled when they come back. If you do want to take a holiday during term time, you must speak to Yasmin, as the London Borough of Hounslow will not pay for your place if you do not attend during term time, as we are closed for all the school holidays. If your child does not attend and we cannot reach you, then your space will be given to the next child on the waiting list (unless there are extenuating circumstances). The same rules apply whether your child is funded or if you are paying fees. Please see our sickness and absence policy for further details.

### **Starting at First Step Playgroup**

We want your child to feel happy and safe at the nursery. To make sure that this is the case, the staff will work with you to decide how to help your child settle into the Playgroup. The nursery has a policy about helping children to settle. A copy is available on our website. We offer virtual home visits by your key person before your child starts, so that we can get to know your child. Please make sure you are available for them. In most cases, children settle quickly; however, if you have any concerns, please speak to your key person, and we will work together to support you and your child.

### **Health & Safety**

- Please make sure that the Playgroup gate into the playgroup close to the road is shut behind you, as well as the front door to the playgroup.

- No dogs are allowed on the nursery property
- No smoking/vaping is allowed on nursery property.
- In hot weather, parents/carers are responsible for providing sun hats and putting on sunblock.
- Buggies and pushchairs are discouraged for those children who can walk; however, if you bring one, then please leave it at the front of the playgroup at your own risk.

### Playgroup Uniform

The children will take part in messy activities which we provide aprons for however, they can still get quite dirty, so please could you dress them in the nursery uniform of black jogging bottoms, white t-shirt and green jumper. The nursery encourages children to gain the skills which help them to be independent and look after themselves. The elasticated jogging bottoms enable them to do this. As this allows them to take themselves to the toilet as they are easy to take on and off. We also aim to go outside as much as possible, so please bring a coat and Wellington boots if it is wet. Please put your child in closed shoes so they can run around without hurting themselves with Velcro grips or buckles so they can put them on themselves.

**Please make sure that all your child's clothing and bags etc, are clearly labelled.**

### Child Protection

First Step Playgroup has a responsibility to report any instances where we feel that a child may have been neglected or abused to the relevant authorities. We may do this without your consent and without informing you if we feel it may put the child at risk.

### Accident & Event Sheets

If your child has an accident or is involved in an incident (event) with another child, you will be sent a message on EYlog, which you will need to send back. This is just to say that we have informed you of what has happened to your child.

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### Previous Injury

We understand that sometimes children can have accidents at home it is our responsibility to record any marks, cuts or bruises that your child might come into the Playgroup with. This will be recorded on a previous injury form, and you will be asked what happened and to sign/or the person you have given the responsibility to pick up your child.

## Parking

There are no parking spaces available on the Playgroup premises; however, we are in a residential area where there is limited parking. Please make sure you do not block any of the local residents' driveways.

## Toys

At First Step Playgroup, we have an extensive amount of toys and equipment that are available to your children every day. Therefore, please do not allow your children to bring in items from home unless we have specifically requested this. If they do bring something in, we cannot accept responsibility for its loss or damage. Also, children sometimes take toys home in their pockets, e.g. small cars. Please could you return any of these items, as it is costly to replace them.

## Breakages/Damage to Nursery Toys & Equipment

Whilst we understand that there will be some damage to toys and equipment when young children play, we will not accept wilful damage. Once a child has the understanding and has been asked not to be rough with the toys or tear books, and continues to do so, then we will ask the parent/guardian to pay for the replacement.

## Dummies And Bottles

We do not encourage the use of dummies at the nursery as they can prevent language from developing and affect children's teeth. If your child uses a dummy, please let their key person know so we can work with you to lessen its use. Bottles are not given at the nursery, and all children are encouraged to use a cup as this can also prevent tooth development, increase tooth decay as well as delay speech.

## Donations

We would be grateful if you could donate boxes of tissues once a month.

## Wipes

Please provide your child with a packet of labelled wipes, as we use them after toileting for all children. You will be asked by your key person to replace them where necessary. Thank you.

## Information

- How you can help at home: ideas are given out regularly on how you can support your child's development
- We put reminders on the walls and doors of the nursery and send messages via WhatsApp, email and Eylog whenever necessary.

- All menus, registration and insurance certificates are placed on our notice board in the hall.

If you have any concerns, issues or comments, you may contact Ofsted by the following methods:

**OFSTED contact details: Ofsted**

**Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
MANCHESTER  
M1 2WD**

Web Address: [www.ofsted.gov.uk/parents](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/parents)

Telephone: 0300 123 1231

**Do you need a place at a nursery?**

First Steps Playgroup is part of Play2Learn Childcare Ltd, which is in Cranford and is a Good setting. Open term time only 8am to 4:00 pm, sessions are available Monday to Friday. It is situated at Cranford Primary school, Berkeley Avenue Cranford TW4 6LB. If you are interested, please call 07493766920 or 020 8577 1699

**Information we hold about you and your child**

We have procedures in place for the recording and sharing of information [data] about you and your child that are compliant with the principles of the General Data Protection Regulations UK (2020) as follows:

The data we collect is

1. Processed fairly, lawfully and in a transparent manner in relation to the data subject you and your family
2. Collected for specified, explicit and legitimate purposes and not further processed for other purposes incompatible with those purposes.
3. Adequate, relevant and limited to what is necessary in relation to the purposes for which data is processed.
4. Accurate and, where necessary, kept up to date.
5. Kept in a form that permits identification of data subjects you and your family for no longer than is necessary for the purposes for which the personal data is processed.

6. Processed in a way that ensures appropriate security of the personal data including protection against unauthorised or unlawful processing and against accidental loss, destruction or damage, using appropriate technical or organisational measures.

When you register your child with us, we will provide you with a privacy notice that gives you further details of how we fulfil our obligations with regard to your data.

### **Policies and Procedures**

*Please ask if you would like a copy. Full policies and procedures are available to be sent through your EYlog account or on our website [www.firststepheston.com](http://www.firststepheston.com)*

- Introduction
- Children's rights and entitlements
- Safeguarding children, young people and vulnerable adults
- Looked after children
- Uncollected child
- Missing child
- Attendance policy
- Online safety (inc mobiles and cameras)
- Employment
- Student placements
- Induction of employees and volunteers
- First Aid
- The role of the key person and settling in
- Staffing
- Administering medicines
- Managing children who are sick and infectious or with allergies
- Recording and reporting of accidents and incidents
- Nappy changing
- Food and drink
- Food hygiene
- Health and safety general standards
- Maintaining children's safety and security on premises
- Staff personal safety, including home visits
- Supervision of children on outings and visits
- Risk assessment
- Fire safety and emergency evacuation
- Animals in the setting
- No Smoking or Vaping
- Valuing diversity and promoting equality

- Special educational needs
- British values
- Admissions
- Parental involvement
- Children's records
- Transfer of records to school
- Privacy notice
- Information sharing
- Working in partnership with other agencies
- Making a complaint
- Physical activity