

# 1st Steps Newsletter

**March 2007.**

Dear Parents,

Its been a busy time at 1<sup>st</sup> Steps. Lots of things happening, Christmas, children leaving, lots of new face, Ofsted visiting, staff holidays, and so on. Sorry to not have thanked you before now in a more personal way, but all the staff would like to thank you for the many gifts, chocolates, wine and biscuits that we received from you. We are all working hard to now get rid of the extra pounds!

We've also had some sudden but exciting news that some of you already know. Alex's baby arrived nearly 7 weeks early. Needless to say, this is why we have been a little hectic as she is still teaching me the ropes and we all thought that we had another month!

Ellis weighed in at a whopping 5lbs, and Alex didn't feel a thing (at the time). All was done in a mad rush but both are doing well and it won't be happening again!!!!!! Alex, Chris and Bailey would like to thank you all, including the great staff, for your cards, gifts and kind wishes. Alex has told me that she will be returning to work soon as she is not a stay at home mum and is climbing the walls with boredom, as cute as he is, he doesn't do anything at the moment!

## **Ofsted**

We had a 2 day visit from Ofsted in January. Many good points were highlighted in the report including how we promote health and safety within the nursery. A copy of the report will be given to you shortly outlining all the findings which can be found on the Ofsted website, [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk).

Enviromental Health have also been into the nursery to take food samples and menu's and their findings have shown that we do offer a good all round healthy and balanced diet (a copy of this report can be viewed – ask at office).

## **Can you help?**

We applied for an inclusion and ICT (Information and Communication Technology) grant for the nursery and have been lucky enough to have received them. Both grants are to be used to improve our library and resource room. However, we'd like your help.

The aim of the bid was to develop speech and language along with communication and listening skills. This is something that can be done at home and in nursery. The use of ICT can be used extensively for both. We want you to be involved making books with your children and be able to use resources with in the nursery.

We don't know whether you are aware or not, but Liverpool celebrates its 800<sup>th</sup> Birthday on the 17<sup>th</sup> July. We are going to celebrate by throwing a garden party and we are looking for ideas and suggestions to help implement our party. This could be in the way of themes to celebrate our culture and diversity within Liverpool, so what type of food and drink will we have? Decorations? Music? We want to make this a family affair, so all parents and relatives are welcome to offer suggestions.

## **Up and coming events**

### **Tinkerbells' Designer Clothes Sale**

**Thursday 29<sup>th</sup> March. 3.15 – 6.00pm**

Designer clothing provided by Tinkerbells.

### **Learning Links Toy Fair – 23<sup>rd</sup> March 3-6pm**

Easter for those little ones. Instead of chocolate that we all end up eating, it's a great opportunity to order an educational toy. Orders will need to be paid for on the day.

### **World Book Day – 12<sup>th</sup> April 4-6pm**

Last year, we had a very successful book sale to celebrate this event. Books were priced between 50p and approximately £5.00.

Children and parents were welcome to buy books from the stall. 2<sup>nd</sup> Steps children visited the nursery with their money in little envelopes and were able to choose their own books and pay for them with their own money. A very valuable experience!

### **Easter Egg Hunt - 6<sup>th</sup> April (upto 8yrs)**

Good Friday event once again. Are you looking for something different to do on Good Friday? When most places are closed and your children are climbing the walls looking for something to do, we have opened up the last 2 years ready for the Easter Bunny and lots of children have bought tickets to be able to come and find what's been left behind.

Tickets will be available prior to the event but will only go ahead if there is enough interest for it. Tickets will cost £3.50 each or 2 for £6.00. The nursery will be open from 10.30 – 12.00pm. Hopefully, if it is a nice day again, we will be able to make good use of outside and children and parents can make use of the equipment.

### **Parents 'Evening'**

Parents 'Evening' is on 25<sup>th</sup> June. All are welcome as usual to have a chat with your child's key worker. We particularly would like to see our Foundation stage parents (3-5 year olds) to attend as this a crucial stage in your child's development.



Letters will be given out 2 weeks prior to the event so that they will not get lost. Please make sure you return the slip so that you can be given an appointment ASAP.

These sessions enable staff to talk at ease to parents during the event (and for you to have a drink and a few nibbles). These sessions can't take place during the day as our staff are busy caring for the children. If they are busy talking to parents for great lengths of time, they can't observe and interact with the children properly.

This will give you plenty of opportunity to discuss your child's development within the Birth to 3 matters framework and the foundation stage.

### **Parking**

Please park sensibly. This also includes if you arrive by taxi. Ask the driver to park in a bay or out of the way so that other parents can drop off quickly and safely.

### **Security**

Passwords. As you all know, we have changed all of your passwords due to a breach in security. We are unsure whether our pendrive for the computer was stolen or lost so we have updated our security just in case.

If you have not received your new passwords please see your room leaders or the office. We will not let your child leave with someone that we cannot identify who does not give us your password.



### **Label personal belongings please.**

Another note about children's belongings, please label them. If your child's belongings are not labelled, it makes it very difficult to trace them. We will not be held responsible for items that are not clearly marked.

### **Clothing**

We begin potty training around age 2. This is usually done in rooms 3 and 4. We will work with you at you and your child's pace. Bring in spare underwear for those little accidents. One thing we do ask is for all nursery underwear to be returned, otherwise you may find your little cherubs coming home in the opposite sexes 'undies'.



### **Update phone numbers and addresses please**

We have had difficulty contacting several parents over the past few weeks due to parents changing their mobiles and getting new numbers. Please inform us ASAP of any changes.

## Dinners

If you are coming in late in the morning, please ensure you let us know by 1030am if your child will require a lunch time meal.

## Prams

Please fold your prams when you bring them in as we need a degree in pram folding because they are all different. Also, there is not enough room for all of them, please try to be considerate to others by folding your prams carefully.



## Room News

There have been a few room changes since the last letter and they are as follows:-

**Room 1: Eileen & Jenny**

**Room 2: Leah, Colette & Steph F**

**Room 3: Tracey & Jackie**

**Room 4: Carla & Jess**

**Room 5: Angela, Christina, Alex & Toni**

**Room 6: Natalie & Dominique**

**Floating staff: Louise, Steph M, Lyndsey, Joanne, Sandra** these staff cover all dinners, breaks and any absences for sickness, holidays, etc.

We have a lot of welcomes to the nursery and they are Ella & Ruby, Jake, Finn, Hallie, Amelia, Grace and Jake to Room 1; Shaun, Lillie and Abbie to Room 2; Grace and Joel to Room 3; Kayla May and Gabrielle to Room 4; Jimbob to Room 5; Lewis and Meah to Room 6.

All have settled in well with only a few tears here and there!

## Room 1

Well done to John and Tyler who have started to crawl and Finn, Jamie and Ella who have all cut their first teeth.

## Room 2

Congratulations to Bonnie May who has taken her first steps in nursery and is the only little one to be able to get my attention from room 2 to the office by being able to shout

Bev! Hermione, Jo and Shaun are all sporting new teeth.

## Room 3

Mountaineering Ruby is getting much steadier now in her mission to climb the walls.

## Room 4

Due to the hard work by staff and obviously all of their parents, Ben, Niamh, Eloise, James and Kyle are all successfully potty trained.

## Room 5 & 6

A big congratulations to Sean who has been one of our quickest potty trained children ever! Harry is coming a close second and will be trained before we know it!

A little reminder of the layout for these rooms!

Children in the rooms can initiate their own play, choosing their own activities whilst being supervised by the staff. Children ultimately learn through play so planning is child initiated.

During the day, there will be two adult led activities which all of the children will be involved in. Observations will be done during these activities to enable us to complete the children's Stepping Stones to Progress development records which follow the children through to school.

The areas are:

Mark making;

Construction;

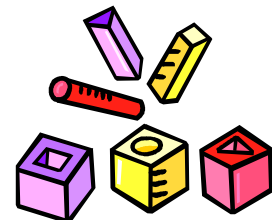
Small World;

Maths;

Role play;

Creativity; Sand and Water

Books and ICT



If you would like any information about the above areas, please ask and staff will be happy to talk to you about them.

Any children who turn 3 during the Summer will soon be entitled to the Nursery Education

Grant. The grant will pay for upto 10 two and half hour sessions a week (dependant on attendance – to be taken between 9 – 11.30 am each morning). Forms will be given out this month. Can you remember to return them as soon as possible as they need returning to Sefton council. If you do not complete them correctly and return them, your grant may be effected.

Our themes for the next couple of months will be Spring, Easter, My Family, Transport, Mini Beasts (so be prepared for the insects), Sensory Room activities, and as always...Nursery rhymes. These are just a couple of the topics that we will be highlighting in the nursery over the next few months. The nursery focus for learning is changing and is now based more on your child's individual interests rather than everyone doing the same thing all at the same time.

Activities for the next few months include visit's to the local park's and library along with possible trips out to the Marina, Museum, Farmer Teds and maybe over to Seacombe again to see the Sea Life Centre.



We will be doing lots of painting and drawing, singing and dancing as usual along with a lot of hat making for our Easter bonnet competition.

To coincide with our Liverpool Anniversary Celebrations, we want Liverpool to make children aware of their culture and intend to go on various trips into the City Centre. A trip on the Liverpool Duck; to look at the Liver Birds, Lamb Banana and the Albert Dock; a trip on the Ferry to cross the Mersey and so on. We are open to suggestions for day trips that you may be able to recommend. Again, we would like your support on these trips as we would like to maintain the highest adult : child ratios at all times while out of the building.

**Nursery is closed on the following days**

Friday 6<sup>th</sup> April; Monday 9<sup>th</sup> April;  
Monday 7<sup>th</sup> May; Monday 28<sup>th</sup> May;  
Monday 27<sup>th</sup> August Bank holidays.  
As agreed on your contracts, there is no fee charged for the days we are closed.

Nursery will be open over the Christmas period this year apart from Christmas, Boxing and New Years Day. Please check for details on how much to deduct from your fees if you are unsure.

Those children receiving Nursery Education Grant do not receive any discount for the bank holidays as this has already been included in your fees over the term.

**Now for the not so nice stuff**

Payment of fees are due in advance. They are also reviewed every 6 months in line with inflation and the minimum wage. We will be increasing them as of 04/06/07 and then they will be reviewed again in the Autumn.

They will be as follows:

- Age 0 to 3: £135.00
- 3+ : £132.50
- Price per day: £29.00
- Price per half day: £16.00

Once again, can we please ask parents to bring their fees up to date. We have so many people who regularly miss payments, duck and dive in and out of the nursery and then leave owing money. We have installed a chip and pin machine to enable you to pay by debit or credit card so you don't have to worry about getting to the bank.

If you do find that you cannot meet a payment, please speak to Alex or Bev and we can come up with some sort of repayment plan.

**Thanks once again to all parents for your help and support throughout the year.  
Alex and Bev.**