



Useful Contact details:

Playgroup Mobile: 07806 744864 Mon-Fri 9.00 – 2pm

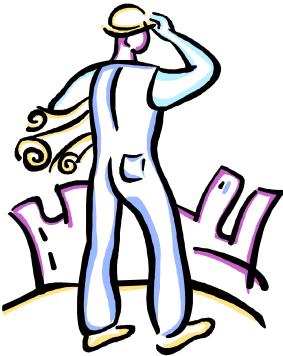
Ann King (chair): 897832 or info@lintongrantaplaygroup.org.uk

Happy New Year and welcome back after the Christmas break. We hope you all had a safe and healthy holiday.

CHRISTMAS FAIR

Thank you for the fantastic support Linton Granta Playgroup and Toddlers' Charity received from you in our Christmas Fair. You may have read that in excess of £830 was raised.

KEEPING SAFE DURING THE BUILDING WORKS AND HI-VIZ VESTS



The building contractors ISG Jackson have supplied every child with a hi-viz vest following concerns about the volume of heavy plant vehicles on the Linton Village College site during the building works.

These vests are available for your child to borrow on long term loan whilst they are with Linton Granta Playgroup and have been numbered so we can track who has

borrowed what.

We strongly recommend that your child wears one of these jackets at all times, even for that short walk from the car to the portacabin. You may of course use these vests for any journey you make on foot, especially during these darker months.

The vests must be brought into playgroup every day as we will require them for the walk round to the garden and back again.

You may choose, if you wish to leave them in the Portacabin on your child's peg.

The builders are due to be on site for the next three years completing all the phases of the development, so the vests must be returned when your child leaves, so the next generation of Linton Granta Playgroup children can remain safe.

CONSIDERATE PARKING

A small number of families are still parking in the drop-off bays outside the Granta School. These are not available for you to use at any time. Last term a Granta School parent was unable to use these bays and had to transfer her daughter from the car to her wheel chair in the middle of the road. As you all know transferring a toddler from a car into a buggy is enough of a struggle...imagine if you were trying to do this with a teenager? Thank you for parking considerately.

Diary Dates

January 2009

12 Jan 09 : term begins

20 Jan 09: Committee Meeting 8pm@ The Portacabin

February 2009

9-13 Feb 09: Super Hero Week

10 Feb 09: Early Literacy Information Evening 7.45-9pm@ The Portacabin

HALF TERM 16-20 Feb 09 NO SESSIONS

21 Feb: new half term begins

April 09

3 April 09: End of Spring Term

EASTER BREAK 4 -19 April 2009*
subject to inset days

FEES AND GRANTS

The committee have produced a short information leaflet about paying fees. A full copy is available from playgroup. Some Frequently Asked Questions are answered below:

- ⇒ **Q. How much are Playgroup fees?**
 - A. £8.20 (morning session from 9.30am – 12.00pm [as at January 1 2009])
- ⇒ **Q. Can my child stay for Extended Day Care sessions ('Lunch')?**
 - A. Yes, if your child has been at Playgroup for more than one term. Spaces are restricted due to staffing ratios, so a place will be offered if there is the availability. The extended session is currently £5.00 for 12pm-1.30pm and is not covered by NEF grants.
- ⇒ **Q. How do I book Extended Day Care ('Lunch')?**
 - A. Please ask for a booking form at Playgroup.
- ⇒ **Q. Why have I been charged an extra £10 on my fee invoice?**
 - A. If you do not pay your invoice within 2 weeks of issue, a late payment penalty of £10 will be added
- ⇒ **Q. What is the best way of paying my invoice?**
 - A. Directly into our account using BACS, by using childcare vouchers or by cheque directly to the Playgroup silver post box. We do accept cash, but prefer the security of receiving larger payments by more secure methods. Please place all deposits in a clearly marked envelope.
- ⇒ **Q. How can I drop a session that I no longer want?**
 - A. Put your request to cancel a session in writing to the Admissions Officer, via the Playgroup silver box. Please date your letter and wait for confirmation of receipt from the Admissions Officer. Your child will no longer attend the setting 7 weeks *from* the date of receipt. Up to that point all fees will still be due.
- ⇒ **Q. What do I do if I have further questions?**
 - A. Please contact either the Treasurer, or Fees & Grants committee member, or one of the Finance Subcommittee.

Have you still got your NEF grant letter lurking at home? These must be returned NOW or you will be invoiced for any fees due.

COMMITTEE MEETING DATE

The next committee meeting has been scheduled for January 20 2009 at 8pm in the Portacabin. For more details please contact the secretary, Vanessa Webb or the chair, Ann King.

RHYME SACKS AND STORY SACKS

Following recent training, we are now keen to introduce these exciting resources in playgroup. Please look out for lists of everyday objects we'll be looking for to help us assemble them. If you are keen on knitting, sewing or woodworking, please let us know about your talents. We are hoping to assemble three sacks this half term: two rhyme sacks "Driving Along in my Car", "Five little Ducks" and a story sack for *Flashing Fire Engines*.

PRE-SCHOOL LEARNING ALLIANCE (PLA) QUESTIONNAIRE

One of the few critical comments that we received from the recent questionnaire I sent out was that a respondent felt the sessions should be more structured in order to "teach" their child more. Over the Christmas break, we have used the Early Years Foundation Stage Development Matters to start to produce a series of sheets explaining how "just playing" is all about investigating, decision making, socialising and exploring as an early learner. These sheets based on the Development Matters section of the Early Years Foundation Stage and look at children aged between 2 and rising 5. They will be on display in the cloakroom area and around the room according to activity. Please take a look, there will be one produced for each area of our continuous provision over this half term.

The PLA have also changed the way they are administering their accreditation scheme, in principal, making it less bureaucratic. We will keep you updated when we have more information about the new process and how it effects the playgroup.

Inside Room 1

Our learning this half term will be based around the children's interest in People Who Help Us. Alongside the more traditional subjects of doctors, nurses, fire fighters and police, we are also looking at super heroes, so get your capes ready for our special super heroes week.

We would love to see more of you coming to play in Room 1 and would like some of you to come to visit us in support of our topic. Last half term we had a disappointing response from our parent community when we asked for help. Please consider supporting your child's learning this half term. The children would like to find out about anyone whose job involves helping others.

The look (and sound) of things to come

We are promoting *Letters and Sounds* games and activities in our everyday planning. *Letters and Sounds* uses a mixture of learning approaches based around the systemic teaching of synthetic phonics through a six phase learning programme which starts in the foundation stage and continues through into key stage one. Synthetic phonics is better known as "sounding out" and has been used as a strategy to help learner readers and writers through encoding and decoding sounds as graphemes (letters).

The background theory

The key difference you may notice is that phase one places greater value on developing discriminatory listening skills, ie hearing rhymes, rhythms, isolating individual types and qualities of sound and phonemes than on recognising and naming letter shapes. What this means in lay terms is that, just as babies learn to speak by gradual exposure to sounds and expression, young children learn to read and write by understanding how complex sounds can be broken down into component parts.

Each individual sound in a spoken word is called a phoneme and the letter (s) written down is called a grapheme.

The complication comes in encoding spoken English when you begin to realise that our verbal language is made up of 42 different sounds and dozens of ways of recording them, but only 26 letter shapes! The classic example of this language tangle is "ghyti". (Answer at the bottom of the page). What *Letters and Sounds* hopes to achieve is a solid understanding of these first language building blocks.

Whilst letters (graphemes) will be on display in the setting and will be discussed with children as the subject arises in their play, traditional "letter of the week" activities will be suspended.

To further support the opportunities offered by our continuous provision, *Letters and Sounds* activities will also be offered in small group work. Two groups per session are planned for Mondays, Wednesday and Fridays. The groups will be largely determined by the availability of room 2 to work in and the day your child attends, rather than age or ability. If your child only attends on a Tuesday or Thursday, we are still finding a way to accommodate a group on these days. Group time will be about 10-15 minutes per week. This half term we will be playing games with the children based around rhythm and rhyme and general sound discrimination. The games will include, "Milk Bottle Shakers", "Silly Soup", "The train's story". We have a DVD you can borrow if you wish showing some of the games and activities in action or you can order the whole pack (it is free) from Prolog on 0845 60 222 60 asking for ref 00281-2007-BKT-EN for an English language version or download from www.teachernet.gov.uk/publications. The pack is also available in other languages.

If you are teaching your child to make letter shapes at home, we have attached a guide to the back of this newsletter. It uses the same formation that they will use at the Infant School. Capital letters should only be used where it is grammatically correct for written English, ie beginning of names, titles and sentences. It is essential to teach your child to hold a pencil with the correct pincer grip to prevent physiological problems in the future, such as cramping.

Please, please remember it is important to let your child simply play with making marks as well as correctly forming graphemes and numerals. Have fun and enjoy before it all gets far too serious.

"Sometimes marks are made for the pure physical enjoyment of the activity – the feel of the felt-tip pen as it glides over the surface of the whiteboard or the chalk as it grates over the bumpy tarmac, the sight of the brightly-coloured dribbles of paint as they run down the paper on the easel, or the sensation of the glue, oozing between children's fingers as they spread it over the paper. On these occasions children have no interest in an end product at all; the physical activity is an end in itself and an opportunity for them to experiment and explore with their senses, developing confidence and dexterity through the process." *Mark Making Matters* December 2008

We would like to find out more about what you child does away from playgroup. This is to help us develop a more joined up policy on shared care-provision and to give us deeper insight into your child's experiences and interests. Please complete the attached time table and return by 24 January 2009. Thanks.

Activities at home

We will be reading

Flashing Fire Engines Tony Mitton

Freddie visits the Doctor Nicola Smee

We will be singing

Miss Dolly had a Dolly, Five Little Monkeys Jumping on the Bed, Five Little Fire Fighters

We will finding out about

How people help us in our own community and (hopefully) having lots of visitors to talk with the children.

Special dates

Chinese New Year week beginning 26 January 2009

Please dress up for Super hero week beginning 9 February 2009

We will also need lots of volunteers to help us meet the Fire Fighters and visit the fire engine. More details to follow as we work out the logistics.

Things to do out and about and at home

Use some chopsticks to eat a meal.

Look out for numerals when you are walking to playgroup (see the Number Detective sheet attached) and talk about what they are for ie registration plates, cards, house numbers, weights etc.

Go for a walk in the mud and look at the prints everyone's boots make or take finger prints.

Measure everyone in your house and see who is tallest. Show your child the numerals on the tape measure and write them down.

Visit www.firemansamonline.com/uk/ to play some games.

Answer ghyti = fish (f as in coughh, y and in pyramid sh as in ratio)

Planning Thoughts: People Who Help Us and Superheroes

PSED

How to ask for help and showing independence in self-care

Talking about own experiences

Dressing and managing fastenings on clothing

Caring for others

Chinese New Year

Communication, Language and Literacy

Writing and mark making for meaning. Using marks for convey quantity (tallies and numerals)

Letters and sounds games: Rhythm and Rhyme

Using speech to talk about experiences and understanding

Creative Development

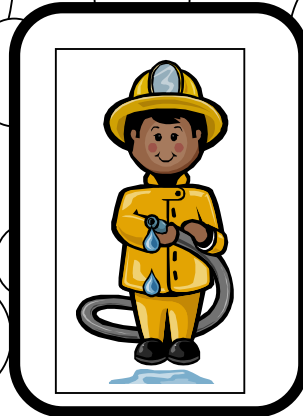
Role play areas: fire station, doctors/hospital, Chinese restaurant, police station, super heroes' hide-out

Wellie boot printing

Self-portraits

Sewing and threading

Listening to music from China



Problem Solving, Reasoning and Numeracy

Recognising numerals as labels (measuring height, number of children in groups etc)

Counting groups of objects.

Matching objects by type

Using and understanding positional language (over, under, in front, behind, in, out)

Physical Development

Fine motor skills and manipulative

Using fingers to manipulate materials and tools

Looking at what makes us unique: taking finger prints and photos of smiles

Healthy eating and hygiene: superfoods and noisy foods for

Knowledge and Understanding

People who help us: fire fighters, health care professionals, police. Visit from Police Officer, Fire fighter, dental nurse, health visitor?

Chinese New Year: Year of the Ox (wb 26.01.09)

Using tools (scissors) safely

Making green tea, using chopsticks, lucky money wallets,

Number Detective Sheet

Instructions

You need a grown up and a pencil to play this game. Go for a walk and see if you can spot these numerals. Make a mark next to each one when you have found it. Why not bring it back to playgroup and stick it in your playgroup dairy?

Name: _____