



Bobtails Playgroup

**8a Roydon Road
Stanstead Abbots
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**Registered Charity Number: 1137973
Member of the Pre-school Learning Alliance
Registered Company Number: 7276992**



Welcome to Bobtails Playgroup

Bobtails Playgroup is an early years setting that offers both structured education and informal play activities for pre-school children. It is a registered charity and is managed by a committee of volunteer parents.

Our setting aims to:

- provide high quality care and education for children below statutory school age;
- work in partnership with parents to help children to learn and develop;
- add to the life and well-being of the local community; and
- offer children and their parents a service that promotes equality and values diversity.

We aim to ensure that each child:

- is in a safe and stimulating environment;
- is given generous care and attention, because of our ratio of qualified staff to children, as well as volunteer parent helpers;
- has the chance to join with other children and adults to live, 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 knows and can do;
- has a personal key person who makes sure each child makes satisfying progress;
- is in a setting that sees parents as partners in helping each child to learn and develop; and
- is in a setting in which parents help to shape the service it offers.

Parents

Parents are regarded as members of our setting who have full participatory rights. These include a right to be:

- valued and respected;
- kept informed;
- consulted;
- involved; and
- included at all levels.

As a community based, voluntary managed setting, we also depend on the good will of parents and their involvement to keep going. Membership of the setting carries expectations on parents for their support and commitment.

Children's development and learning

The provision for children's development and learning is guided by The Early Years Foundation Stage (DCFS 2007). From September 2008 the Early Years Foundation Stage became law. This brings together Birth to Three Matters and the Curriculum Guidance for the Foundation Stage. Our provision reflects the four key themes and 16 commitments of the Early Years Foundation Stage.

A Unique Child

- Child Development: Skilful communicator, competent learner.
- Inclusive Practice: Equality and diversity, children's entitlements, early support.
- Keeping Safe: Being safe and protected, discovering boundaries, making choices.
- Health and Well-being: Growth and developing, physical and emotional wellbeing.

Positive Relationships

- Respecting Each Other: Understanding feelings, friendship, professional relationships.
- Parents as Partners: Respecting diversity, communication, learning together.
- Supporting Learning: Positive interactions, listening to children, effective teaching.
- Key Person: Secure attachment, shared care, independence.

Enabling Environments

- Observation, Assessment and Planning: Starting with the child, planning, assessment.
- Supporting Every Child: Children's needs, the learning journey, working together.
- The Learning Environment: The emotional environment, the outdoor environment, the indoor environment.
- The Wider Context: Transitions and continuity, multi-agency working, the community.

Learning and Development

- Play and Exploration: Learning through experience, adult involvement, contexts for learning.
- Active Learning: Mental and physical involvement, decision making, personalised learning.
- Creativity and Physical Thinking: Making connections, transforming and understanding, sustained shared thinking.
- Areas of Development and Learning.

How we provide for development and learning

Children start to learn about the world around them from the moment they are born. The care and education offered by our setting helps children to continue to do this by providing all of the children with interesting activities that are appropriate for their age and stage of development.

The Areas of Development and Learning comprise:

- personal, social and emotional development;
- communication, language and literacy development;
- problem solving, reasoning and numeracy;
- knowledge and understanding of the world;
- physical development; and
- creative development.

For each area, the practice guidance sets out the Early Learning Goals. These goals state what it is expected that children will know and be able to do by the end of the reception year of their education. The practice guidance also sets out in 'Development Matters' the likely stages of progress a child makes along their learning journey towards the early learning goals. Our setting has regard to these matters when we assess children and plan for their learning.

Personal, social and emotional development

Our programme supports children to develop:

- positive approaches to learning and finding out about the world around them;
- confidence in themselves and their ability to do things, and valuing their own achievements;
- their ability to get on, work and make friendships with other people, both children and adults;
- their awareness of, and being able to keep to, the rules which we all need to help us to look after ourselves, other people and our environment;
- their ability to dress and undress themselves, and look after their personal hygiene needs; and
- their ability to expect to have their ways of doing things respected and to respect other people's ways of doing things.

Communication, language and literacy

Our programme supports children to develop:

- conversational skills with one other person, in small groups and in large groups to talk with and listen to others;
- their vocabulary by learning the meaning of - and being able to use - new words;
- their ability to use words to describe their experiences;
- their knowledge of the sounds and letters that make up the words we use;
- their ability to listen to, and talk about, stories;
- knowledge of how to handle books and that they can be a source of stories and information;
- knowledge of the purposes for which we use writing; and
- making their own attempts at writing.

Problem solving, reasoning and numeracy

Our programme supports children to develop:

- understanding and ideas about how many, how much, how far and how big;
- understanding and ideas about patterns, the shape of objects and parts of objects, and the amount of space taken up by objects;
- understanding that numbers help us to answer questions about how many, how much, how far and how big;
- understanding and ideas about how to use counting to find out how many; and
- early ideas about the result of adding more or taking away from the amount we already have.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

Our programme supports children to develop:

- knowledge about the natural world and how it works;
- knowledge about the made world and how it works;
- their learning about how to choose, and use, the right tool for a task;
- their learning about computers, how to use them and what they can help us to do;
- their skills on how to put together ideas about past and present and the links between them;
- their learning about their locality and its special features; and
- their learning about their own and other cultures.

Physical development

Our programme supports children to develop:

- increasing control over the large movements that they can make with their arms, legs and bodies, so that they can run, jump, hop, skip, roll, climb, balance and lift;
- increasing control over the small movements they can make with their arms, wrists and hands, so that they can pick up and use objects, tools and materials; and
- their understanding about the importance of, and how to look after, their bodies.

Creative development

Our programme supports children to develop:

- the use of paint, materials, music, dance, words, stories and role-play to express their ideas and feelings; and
- their interest in the way that paint, materials, music, dance, words, stories and role-play can be used to express ideas and feelings.

Our approach to learning and development and assessment

Learning through play

Play helps young children to learn and develop through doing and talking, which research has shown to be the means by which young children learn to think. Our setting uses the practice guidance Early Years Foundation Stage 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 practice guidance to the Early Years Foundation Stage has been used to decide what equipment to provide and how to provide it.

Assessment

We assess how young children are learning and developing by observing them frequently. We use information that we gain from observations, as well as from photographs or videos of the children, to document their progress and where this may be leading them. We believe that parents know their children best and we ask them to contribute to assessment by sharing information about what their children like to do at home and how they as parents are supporting development.

We make periodic assessment summaries of children's achievement based on our ongoing development records. These form part of children's records of achievement. We undertake these assessment summaries at regular intervals as well as times of transition, such as when a child moves into a different group or when they go on to school.

Records of achievement

The setting keeps a record of achievement for each child. Staff and parents working together on their children's records of achievement is one of the ways in which the key person and parents work in partnership. Your child's record of achievement helps us to celebrate together her/his achievements and to work together to provide what your child needs for her/his well-being and to make progress.

Your child's key person will work with you to keep this record. To do this you and she/he will collect information about your child's needs, activities, interests and achievements. This information will enable the key person to identify your child's stage of progress. You and the key person will then decide on how to help your child to move on to the next stage.

Working together for your children

In our setting we maintain the ratio of adults to children in the setting that is set through the Welfare Requirements. We also have volunteer parent helpers where possible to complement these ratios. 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.

The staff who work at our setting are:

Name	Job Title	Qualifications and Experience
Mrs Keely Smith	Playgroup/Teddyclub Leader	NVQ Level 3 Child Care Learning and Development
Mrs Lisa Larkman	Deputy Playgroup Leader keyperson	NVQ Level 3 Child Care Learning and Development
Mrs Louise Bruno	Playgroup Assistant / keyperson	NVQ Level 3 Child Care Learning and Development
Miss Katie Wilson	Playgroup Assistant /keyperson	NVQ Level 5 Child Care Learning and Development
Mrs Sharon Peppiatt	Playgroup Assistant/ keyworker	NQV Level 3 Child Care Learning and Development
Mrs Nicola Hancock	Playgroup Assistant/ keyworker	NQV Level 3 Child Care Learning and Development
Mrs Sarah Merritt	Playgroup Assistant/ Keyworker	NVQ Level 2 Child Care Learning and Development. Studying Level 3 at present.
Miss Olivia Gregory	Playgroup assistant apprentice	Studying NVQ Level 2 Childcare learning and development.

How parents take part in the setting

Our setting recognises parents as the first and most important educators of their children. All of the staff see themselves as partners with parents in providing care and education for their child. There are many ways in which parents take part in making the setting 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 setting;
- 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;
- being part of the management of the setting;
- taking part in events and informal discussions about the activities and curriculum provided by the setting;
- joining in community activities in which the setting takes part; and
- building friendships with other parents in the setting.

Joining in

Parents can offer to take part in a session by sharing their own interests and skills with the children. Parents have visited the setting to play the clarinet for the children, show pictures of the local carnival held in their neighbourhood, and show the children their collection of shells. We welcome parents to drop into the setting to see it at work or to speak with the staff.

Key persons and your child

Our setting uses a key person approach. 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 we provide is right for your child's particular needs and interests. When your child first starts at the setting, she/he will help your child to settle and throughout your child's time at the setting, she/he will help your child to benefit from the setting's activities.

Learning opportunities for adults

As well as gaining qualifications in early years care and education, the setting staff take part in further training to help them to keep up-to-date with thinking about early years care and education. The setting also keeps itself up-to-date with best practice in early years care and education, as a member of the Pre-school Learning Alliance, through the Under 5 magazine and publications produced by the Alliance. The current copy of Under Five is available for you to read. From time to time the setting holds learning events for parents. These usually look at how adults can help children to learn and develop in their early years. Courses on similar topics are held locally by the Pre-school Learning Alliance; watch out for information about these.

Opening times

We are open every weekday during term time from 8.45 to 11.45 every morning. Children are normally admitted at the beginning of the term in which they are three. On starting, the children will be offered a minimum of two sessions, depending on spaces available, with the hope that all children increase to at least four sessions before leaving to attend nursery. All the sessions take place in our premises in Roydon Road, Stanstead Abbots.

The setting's timetable and routines

Our setting believes that care and education are equally important in the experience which we offer children. The routines and activities that make up the day in the setting are provided in ways that:

- help each child to feel that she/he is a valued member of the setting;

- 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

We organise our 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 helping them to learn to work with others. 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.

Snacks and meals

The setting makes snacks and meals a social time at which children and adults eat together. We plan the menus for snacks and meals so that they provide the children with healthy and nutritious food. Do tell us about your child's dietary needs and we will make sure that these are met.

Policies

Copies of the setting's policies and procedures are available for you to see at the Playgroup.

The setting's policies help us to make sure that the service provided by the setting is a high quality one and that being a member of the setting is an enjoyable and beneficial experience for each child and her/his parents.

The staff and parents of the setting work together to adopt the policies and they all have the opportunity to take part in the annual review of the policies. This review helps us to make sure that the policies are enabling the setting to provide a quality service for its members and the local community.

Safeguarding children

Our setting has a duty under the law to help safeguard children against suspected or actual 'significant harm'.

Our employment practices ensure children against the likelihood of abuse in our settings and we have a procedure for managing complaints or allegations against a member of staff.

Our way of working with children and their parents ensures we are aware of any problems that may emerge and can offer support, including referral to appropriate agencies when necessary, to help families in difficulty.

Special needs

As part of the setting's policy to make sure that its provision meets the needs of each individual child, we take account of any special needs a child may have. The setting works to the requirements of the 1993 Education Act and The Special Educational Needs Code of Practice (2001).

Our Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator is Lisa, our Deputy Playgroup Leader and Louise Bruno.

Registration and Insurance

Bobtails Playgroup is inspected by Ofsted (www.ofsted.gov.uk) and has full insurance cover for up to 30 children per session. Our Ofsted Unique Reference Number (URN) is EY418533.

The management of our setting

A parent management committee - whose members are elected by the parents of the children who attend the Playgroup - manages the setting. The elections take place at our Annual General Meeting. The committee is responsible for:

- managing the setting's finances;
- employing and managing the staff;
- making sure that the setting has, and works to, policies that help it to provide a high quality service; and
- making sure that the setting works in partnership with the children's parents.

The Annual General Meeting is open to the parents of all of the children who attend the setting. It is our shared forum for looking back over the previous year's activities and shaping the coming year's plan.

Fees

The fees are £13 per session, payable at the start of each half-term. Fees must still be paid if children are absent without notice for a short period of time. If your child has to be absent over a long period of time, talk to Keely Smith who is the Playgroup Leader or the Committee Chairperson.

For your child to keep her/his place at the setting, you must pay the fees. From the term after which your child turns three, you are entitled to 15 hours nursery education funding a week although you can, of course, choose not to take up the full 15 hours. Where funding is not received, then fees apply.

Every attempt is made to keep fees to a minimum whilst ensuring that Playgroup expenses are covered.

The Committee is active in raising additional funds by a variety of events throughout each year to continue to develop the facilities.

Starting at our setting

The first days

We want your child to feel happy and safe with us. To make sure that this is the case, the staff will work with you to decide on how to help your child to settle into the setting. The setting has a policy about helping children to settle into the setting: a copy is available to view at the Playgroup.

Clothing

We provide protective clothing for the children when they play with messy activities.

We encourage children to gain the skills that help them to be independent and look after themselves.

These include taking themselves to the toilet and taking off, and putting on, outdoor clothes. Clothing that is easy for them to manage will help them to do this.

Although uniform is not compulsory, the children look smart wearing the blue polo shirts and royal blue sweatshirts that have the Bobtails Playgroup and Teddy Club logo. Information on how to purchase these will be in your welcome pack.

TERMS AND CONDITIONS OF BOBTAILS PLAYGROUP

These terms and conditions have been set out for the health and safety of the children, and to assist in the smooth running of Bobtails Playgroup.

1. Fees are to be paid within the first two weeks of each half term period. We regret that fees must still be paid during a child's absence/sickness, including holidays. If a child is ill for more than two weeks a retainer may be charged for keeping the place open but weekly fees will not be requested.
2. **We require SIX WEEKS WRITTEN NOTICE to cancel your child's place** - this includes six weeks notice if your child will be going up to a School Nursery. If you cancel your child's place giving less than six weeks written notice or move your child into a School Nursery without six weeks written notice, we maintain the right to charge fees equivalent to the notice period at the rate applicable to your child's sessions booked.
3. Punctuality is appreciated for both bringing and collecting your child. Your child should not be left before 9.00am as the group's insurance policy does not cover them for this time. Bobtails staff must be informed when you leave your child if someone else is going to be collecting them. If no arrangement has been made, your child cannot be released into their care.
4. A choice of milk or water will be provided at snack time with a variety of snacks.
5. A child who has an infectious disease or sickness should not attend the playgroup. It is appreciated if you would inform us should your child contact an infectious disease that could have been transmitted to other children e.g. chickenpox.
If your child has a stomach upset/diarrhoea, please keep them at home until 24 hours after the sickness/diarrhoea has stopped.
6. If a child is taken ill during a session you will be informed and they will be kept in a quiet area with supervision until collection.
7. Please notify the staff of any change of address, contact telephone number or other significant change to the information given on the admission sheet.

8. Please mark all your child's belongings with their name - this includes clothing that is likely to be taken off during the session. Also, please do not bring your child in their 'best' clothes. Every effort is made to protect clothing during painting, gluing etc., but accidents do happen. Wellingtons are not to be worn in the main room.
9. No physical punishment is used in the playgroup, and we practice positive reinforcement for all children in our care.
10. It is preferred that children are toilet-trained before commencing Bobtails. However if your child is not dry we will work with you and your child to achieve this. If your child has any permanent health or toilet problems, please let the staff know and note this on the admission form.
11. We are an equal opportunities playgroup and encourage admission of all children regardless of gender, race, religion, culture or disability.
12. Bobtails Playgroup works in partnership with parents, and respects confidentiality. However, the Children's Act 1989 places a clear responsibility on child care & education establishments to ensure they work together with other agencies to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children. As a result, if concerns are raised within the Playgroup, or parents report an issue involving possible abuse, we would not be able to guarantee confidentiality. It would have to be referred to Social Services. This is in line with government and Hertfordshire policy.
13. The Playgroup staff are continuously attending courses & updating. As part of this, it may be necessary for them to carry out child studies/observations on children in the Playgroup. This involves written work, with first name only and date of birth of the child. Photographs may also be taken to supplement the written work. This work may be seen outside the Playgroup by lecturers and external moderators.
You are entitled to see anything written on your child by any member of staff carrying out this work. If you have any objections to your child being used for this purpose, or would prefer to see the work if it involves your child -please make this known to the Playgroup Leader.

We hope that you and your child enjoy being members of our setting and that you both find taking part in our activities interesting and stimulating. The staff are always ready and willing to talk with you about your ideas, views or questions.

FURTHER INFORMATION

For further information about Bobtails Playgroup, please contact the Playgroup Leader Keely Smith on 01920 871273 or email playleader@bobtailsplaygroup.org.uk.

BOBTAILS PLAYGROUP



I request that my child be offered a place at the Playgroup.

NAME & ADDRESS OF CHILD:

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TELEPHONE NUMBER:

DATE OF BIRTH:

EMAIL

SESSION PREFERENCES: (please circle which sessions you require)

Monday / Tuesday / Tuesday pm / Wednesday / Thursday / Friday

You will be informed by Admissions two weeks before the end of the preceding term in which your child is due to start, if a place has been allocated.

I agree to abide by the terms and conditions of Bobtails Playgroup. I understand that should I not require the place offered, I must inform the Playgroup no less than six weeks before my child is due to start and agree that if this notice period is not given I will be liable for the fees owed in lieu of notice.

SIGNED:

RELATIONSHIP:

DATE:

Please return to the Playgroup Leader via email on playleader@bobtailsplaygroup.org.uk

Thank you.