



The Ark Newsletter September 2009

Welcome back to The Ark and the start of a new academic year. A very warm welcome to all the new children who have just started and their parents/guardians.

Despite the indifferent weather many families enjoyed our Family BBQ on 18th July and we would like to thank everyone who donated raffle prizes and/or gave their time and hard work to make the day a success. We are pleased to report that we made a profit of £260 on the raffle which is being put towards ongoing improvements to our outdoor area.

Holiday Club ran for six weeks this summer and was very well subscribed. We were able to make the most of the few sunny days we had and use the full extent of the school grounds.

Keyworkers

Whilst at The Ark your child will be allocated a member of staff to be their keyworker for the year. Keyworkers build up close relationships with their group of children, carrying out continual assessments, and planning activities to suit the children's individual needs. You are always welcome to discuss your child's development with your child's key worker and see his/her records at any time.

Your child's keyworker is.....

On **Wednesday 23rd September 2009** at **7.30pm** we are holding an informal welcome evening for parents, where you can meet staff; giving you the opportunity to ask questions about the Early Years Foundation Stage, how children learn through play, record-keeping and keyworkers. As we are a committee-run charity, one of our committee members will also be on hand to explain the role of the committee. Light refreshments will be served.

Information is also displayed as follows:

Keyworker list – on each room door

Weekly plans – Above signing in book; Babies are additionally on their
room door

Menus – above signing in book

Important Information

- **Swine Flu and Other Illnesses** – if your child shows any signs of illness, especially flu-like symptoms with a high fever, aches and pains and a cough, cold or runny nose, please keep your child at home until he/she is completely better. Following the latest advice from the Dorset and Somerset Health Protection Unit and NHS Dorset, The Ark will not close if any child at our setting is diagnosed with swine flu, unless circumstances change. We will inform you if any child or member of staff is diagnosed with swine flu. However, please be aware that should several staff become ill at the same time, we may need to close due to lack of qualified staff; therefore it is essential we do our utmost to limit the spread of infection.
- **Contact Details etc** – please make sure you keep us up to date with all your contact details such as home and work addresses and telephone numbers. It is also extremely important to keep us aware of any medical conditions or other relevant information.
- **Misplaced Clothing & Footwear** - we constantly have a tub full of uncollected clothes and footwear, much of which is unnamed. Please ensure you name all your child's belongings, especially coats and footwear. We have drawstring boot bags for sale at £4.00 each which are very useful for keeping spare clothes and footwear on your child's peg, as well as cotton footprint bags for sale at £2.50.
- **Shirts** - we also sell children's T-shirts, polo shirts and sweatshirts with The Ark logo in a variety of colours. Examples and prices are displayed in the corridor. Please ask Maggie or Pauline if you would like to buy any of the above items.
- **Fruit Donations and Healthy Lunchboxes** - at The Ark we promote healthy eating and would like to thank you for your continued support in providing a piece of fruit for snack time for children aged 2+. The children do enjoy sharing their fruit. Popular fruits are apples, bananas, grapes and pears. PLEASE NO KIWI FRUIT. Please put any items you bring in the fruit bowl by the signing in book. If your child stays for a lunchtime session and brings a lunchbox, please support our healthy eating ethos by providing your child with a healthy lunch.
- **Parking** – there is **no parking** in the car between the hours of 8.15am to 3.30pm unless you have been issued with a parking permit (due to disability); and if you do park outside these hours please do not use the four spaces next to the grassed area as they are reserved for The Ark staff. If you think you may qualify for a parking permit please ask Pauline or Maggie.

- **Fees** – as notified in the July newsletter fees are being increased from this September as follows:

Morning/Afternoon sessions (9 – 11.30am/12.45 – 3.15pm)

£9.50 over 3s; £10.50 2 – 3 yr olds. However, the fee for 2 – 3 yr olds who come from 8am to 6pm and have a hot lunch will remain at £35.75 for the day.

Hot lunch from Monday 7th September 2009

£2 each (in addition to £3 for the session).

Childcare Places incl. After-School & Holiday Club

Sessions this year at The Ark are now full in the mornings with some vacancies in the afternoons. Therefore, if you would like to swap two mornings for one full day this would help us free up more full days for working parents. Please talk to Pauline or Maggie if you would like to do this or if you need to change your child's sessions in any other way. Please note that The Ark needs a minimum of one month's notice in writing for any over all reductions in sessions.

There are some vacancies for Breakfast, After School and Holiday Clubs so please see Pauline or Maggie if you wish to book your child in for any of these sessions. Now that these sessions are filling up it is advisable to book regular sessions in advance; the same rules will apply with regard to the requirement to give one month's notice for holidays/any changes. You may still book ad hoc sessions if spaces are available but please note that from now on any ad hoc spaces booked but not taken will be charged for in full, unless cancelled more than 24 hours in advance.

Fire Procedure

In the event of a fire, the following emergency arrangements will be implemented. The children will be escorted out of the building to the fire assembly point which is the recreational field next to the school grounds. From here, parents will be contacted to collect their children. If the weather is unfavourable the children will be taken to the community centre next to the park and looked after by staff until collected.

Jumble Sale

Saturday 26th September 2009 from 12 noon – 2.00pm at the Village Hall. Please leave donations of jumble at the hall from 10.00am on the morning. Any parents who would be willing to help either in the morning sorting out jumble, or during the sale itself would be most welcome – please speak to Pauline , Maggie or one of the committee.

Staffing Matters

We welcome two new members of staff: Emma Turner has joined the 0-2 room during the afternoons, whilst Emma Anker is on maternity leave, and Katie is working two days a week during the After School period. At the end of September Tiffany is leaving to commence nursing training and Josie will be moving into the 0 - 2 room.

We are pleased to report that Sarah White has successfully completed her apprenticeship and NVQ Level II and will continue to work in the Pre-school room full time. Lucy has also completed NVQ Level II. Sarah Beck and Sue have recently embarked on training towards NVQ Level II.

We are also pleased to report that Heather has achieved Early Years Professional Status, whilst Pauline embarks on her part-time top-up degree course in Early Years at Bath University, having completed the Foundation degree in June.

Lauren, who mainly works during After School hours, will be leaving us in October and going to South Africa for six months from January, and we wish both her and Tiffany good wishes for the future.

Toddler Group

The Toddler Group is funded through The Ark, although it is run separately by parent volunteers. It is held every Monday morning from 9.30am in the Community Centre. It gives parents the opportunity for both themselves and their children to meet and socialise with other parents, and a small fee is charged as and when they attend. If any parent has any questions regarding Toddler Group please ask Maggie.

We hope that your child has an enjoyable and fun-packed term at The Ark. If you have any questions or concerns please do not hesitate to speak to a member of staff.

Dates for your diary

Events

Parents' Information Evening - Wednesday 23rd September 2009 at 7.30pm

Jumble Sale - Saturday 26th September 2009 from 12 noon – 2.00pm at the Village Hall

Opening Times

The Ark is open all year round **except:**

All Bank Holidays

Christmas - closed on Thursday 24th December 2009, and opening again Monday 4th January 2010

Summer - Closed Monday 30th August 2010– Friday 3rd September 2010

Term Time Dates

Autumn Term 2009

Monday 7th September 2009 – Friday 18th December 2009

Spring Term 2010

Tuesday 5th January 2010* – Thursday 1st April 2010

Summer Term 2010

Monday 19th April 2010 – Thursday 22nd July 2010*

Half Terms: Monday 26th October 2009 – Friday 30th October 2009 - Holiday Club at The Ark

Monday 21st, Tuesday 22nd & Wednesday 23rd December 2009; Monday 4th January 2010 – Holiday Club at The Ark

Monday 15th February 2010 – Friday 19th February 2010 - Holiday Club at The Ark

Friday 28th May;* Tuesday 1st June 2010 – Friday 4th June 2010 - Holiday Club at The Ark

*This is a change to previously notified dates