



Footsteps St. Andrew's Church Playgroup
Graves Street, Radcliffe, Manchester M26 4GE
Telephone: 07967 714534

News and Information 18th October 2017

Dear Parents/Carers,

THEMES

Our themes this half term are:

➤ **Autumn**

We will talk about hedgehogs, owls and other nocturnal animals. This will involve lots of creative activities - making pictures with varied resources and the leaves and twigs the children have been collecting on their way to Footsteps or when visiting a park. We will be going on an Autumn walk around St. Andrew's School's large playing field to look for signs of Autumn whilst collecting clues hidden by the 'dinosaurs' during our sponsored fundraising event - 'Welly Waddle'.

➤ **Letters and Sounds**

This half term we have introduced some of the nursery aged children to Phase 1 of this programme and they have been learning new songs, listening to music and sounds in the environment to help develop their listening skills. Lots of the new children have shown interest too and wanted to take part in the activities such as making musical instruments. You can help at home if your child wants to join in by following some of the ideas below. Please let us know on Tapestry if you have tried any of these at home.

Ways you can support your children at home: talking and listening

- **Make time to listen to your child talking** - as you meet them from their setting or school, as you walk, or travel home by car, in the supermarket as you shop, at meal times, bath times, bedtimes - any time!
- **Switch off the TV, radio and mobile phones** - and really listen!
- **Show that you are interested in what they are talking about** - look at your child, smile, nod your head, ask a question or make a response to show that you really have been listening.
- **Make a collection of different toy creatures** - for example, a duck, a snake, an alien, say the sound it might make as you play together, for example, 'quack-quack', 'sssssss', 'yuk-yuk', and encourage your child to copy you.
- **Listen at home** - switch off the TV and listen to the sounds, both inside and outside the home. Can your child tell you what sounds they heard, in the order in which they heard them?
- **Play-a-tune** - and follow me! Make or buy some simple shakers, drums and beaters, then play a simple tune and ask your child to copy. Have fun!
- **Use puppets** and toys to make up stories or retell known ones. Record your child telling the story and play it back to them.

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➤ **Bonfire Night**

We will be talking to the children about firework safety and the organised family events they may be going to. They will be able to make their own firework picture by drizzling glue and then sprinkling the glitter on top of the glue to make it sparkle. The children will also be able to make their own breadstick sparkler by decorating the end of a breadstick with icing and sprinkles.

➤ **Christmas**

The children will be making Christmas cards, decorations, a surprise and practicing Christmas songs. We will be learning about the birth of baby Jesus by doing lots of activities based around the Nativity.

CHILDREN IN NEED - Friday 17th November 2017

On Monday 13th November and Thursday 16th November we will be having 'Teddy Bears Picnics' during the morning and afternoon sessions and we would like all children to bring a Teddy Bear and silver pennies to put in the 'Pudsey Bear Box' to make a donation to Children in Need. The children will be decorating biscuits and we will have lots of teddy bear shaped food, fun and games at the parties. If anyone would like to donate towards the party food or a pass the parcel prize please let an Auntie know as soon as possible. For example; loaf of brown bread, spread cheese, teddy bear crisps, grapes (we cut them in half), iced buns or sugar free juice. We will talk to the children and let them know that Pudsey Bear is a bear who collects lots of pennies to buy special toys for poorly children! The Aunties will be wearing Pudsey T shirts and the children are invited to wear something spotty if they would like to. Last year some of the children wore homemade spotty t-shirts which looked great and were inexpensive. Children who are in on Friday 17th can wear their Pudsey T shirt, although we are not holding a party on this date.

*If your child attends Footsteps on Monday and Thursday can you please make sure that they bring a Teddy on **each day**. **Please put a label on your child's teddy with their own name on it**. If your child does not attend on these days please speak to Auntie Karen or Auntie Deb as soon as possible to make arrangements to come a different day if possible.

FUNDRAISING - WELLY WADDLE - WEEK BEGINNING MONDAY 20TH NOVEMBER 2017

During the days of the Autumn walks the children will take part in a sponsored 'Welly Waddle' to raise funds to buy resources to enhance our garden area. The children have said they would like new bikes and dolls prams. We will be sending home a sponsor form for those who can help to collect sponsors from family and friends to sponsor your child to take part the week beginning Monday 13th November. Thank you.

PHOTOGRAPHS

The Early Years photographer will be at Footsteps on Tuesday 31st October at 9am and Thursday 2nd November at 12.35pm to take individual/sibling child photographs. The photographs will arrive in time for Christmas. All orders, except black and white prints can be ordered by returning your form and payment to Footsteps. Cheques must be made payable to Tempest Photography. Please ensure all orders are returned by Friday 24th November 2017 to ensure Christmas delivery. Footsteps will receive 20% of all orders placed which helps towards the purchase of much needed resources. Thank you for your support.

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BIRTHDAYS

Birthdays - Fruit (strawberries, melon, pineapple, grapes etc) can be brought in and shared at snack time to comply with our healthy eating policy which is in line with our Golden Apple Award which we have been awarded the 'Gold' standard again this year. We would therefore ask that you do not bring packets of sweets or birthday cakes into Footsteps as we use an ornamental birthday cake with real candles on it to help the children celebrate their birthday. We appreciate your support on this matter. Thank you.

CHILD LEARNING JOURNEYS - TAPESTRY ON-LINE

Thank you to all those parents/carers who have logged on and given us feedback on your child's learning and development. This is an essential 2 way partnership which will enable us to work together to plan for your own child's next steps. Please let us know if you are having any problems with the way it works or need a new password for access. We have added lots of photos and Characteristics of effective learning assessments to give us their baseline assessment at 6 weeks for those children who started with us in September 2017. Thank you to those parents who have returned their highlighted copy of where you feel your child is secure at on the tracking document we sent home. After half term we will be concentrating more on your child's next steps and will be adding wow moments and significant learning which will mean less photos but over the course of the year you will see lots of memories posted on there. We love to see your pictures and comments added to it too!

FAMILY BOOKS

Most of the children have now begun to settle well with us and it would be beneficial to your child if they had something at Footsteps that was familiar to them. We would like each child to make a book about themselves and their family. Please could your child bring in a small photograph of themselves and photographs of members of their own family, i.e. parents, siblings, grandparents, pets after half term (approximately 6 or 7 photos of 3 x 5 size). These books will help reassure your child and begin to form a strong link with Footsteps and their home life. These books will be kept in the book area for your child to look at and share with the Aunties and their friends. You may have already seen this request in the letter 'What to expect when my child starts at Footsteps' they took home on their start date. The children returning to us this year may already have a family book but if they haven't and you would like to send in the photos we would love to make the books with the children.

3 YEAR OLD FUNDING

If your child's 3rd birthday falls between 1st September and 31st December 2017 your child will be eligible to claim 3 year old funding from January 2018. We ask that you bring in their birth certificate and see myself or Auntie Deb to check the child's birthday to enable the information to be processed so we can access the funding for you. If you do require additional hours or wrap around care including breakfast or lunch cover please make sure we have you on the register. Thank you.

MOBILE PHONES

Reminder - Please note that Footsteps premises do not allow the use of mobile phones in the setting/playground. If someone else is collecting your child from Footsteps, please make them aware. It is nice to see parents/carers greet their child with a smile and not a mobile phone when they collect them and to chat about their time at Footsteps. The staff keep their own mobile phones in a box in the kitchen area as they are not allowed in the setting.

BAGS IN THE ENTRANCE HALL

Please note that all children have access to the entrance hall so they can access their coat pegs and this means they also have access to bags which may contain medication or carrier bags. Please hand all **prescribed medicines** to an Auntie to be kept out of reach in the kitchen area in a medication box. Please note that we cannot give children calpol at Footsteps unless it is prescribed by your family doctor. If it is a recent prescription we require our medication book to be completed before we can administer the medicine.

Please hand any wows, snack or letters to us in the mornings as we will not know they are in the childrens bags initially. Thank you.

AUNTIES ACHIEVEMENTS

I have great pleasure in informing you that the Aunties at Footsteps embrace the training opportunities offered to them to develop their own professional practice in caring for your children. Recent training completed includes:

The Storyteller (telling a story through role play)	- Auntie Louise R
Safeguarding children with additional needs	- Aunties Louise M, Deb and Karen
Letters and Sounds Phase 1	- Auntie Michelle

All staff are regularly updated on safeguarding children and any changes in policy (Staff meeting 29th September 2017)

All staff show such dedication and commitment in raising standards for the children in our care and I am very proud of them all.

Yours sincerely

Karen Ramsay
Playgroup Leader