

# Learning through play at



....STAY,PLAY,EXPLORE & LEARN....

Visit our web-site at [www.littlestepspreschool.co.uk](http://www.littlestepspreschool.co.uk)

North Newton Village Hall  
Church Road  
North Newton  
Somerset  
TA7 0BG

Pre-school Leader: Helen Barham  
Tel: 07745229438

Registered Charity No: 1021256



## Introduction

The Pre-School has been established since 1977 and is situated within the Village Hall in North Newton, opposite North Newton Community Primary School. We are a registered charity and are run by a committee, the majority made up of parents and carers.

Our aim is to enhance the development and education of children under statutory school age by treating each child as an individual, giving them the opportunity to develop their independence, confidence and self esteem within a safe, secure and stimulating environment. Every child is unique and our aim is to help each child achieve their full potential in their own time. The main emphasis at Little Steps is learning through play. We provide appropriate learning opportunities for all children and aim to provide inclusive care for all.

## The Curriculum

Children are encouraged to take part in as many activities as possible and no child will ever be forced to do an activity they don't want to do. The room layout and activities enable the children to freely move from one area / activity to another including the outside area depending on their own interests and choices (free flow play). Research has shown that children's learning is enriched and of a higher quality when their own interests are taken into account.

We have new themes each half term to add variety and depth to the children's learning, and also take part in community activities such as **church festivals** and **school events** as well as organizing **our own trips**. We have an excellent relationship with **North Newton Community Primary School** and regularly visit the school to use their playground and share resources and activities such as a visiting theatre company or artists.

During each session we aim to provide toys and activities to stimulate all areas of a child's development. For example, we use painting, construction, home corner (role play), dough, crafts and use the garden daily whatever the weather! To develop finer motor skills we use crayons, scissors, play dough and construction toys. To encourage social and emotional development we have regular 'circle time' where the children are encouraged to tell their news or show items they have brought in from home, as well as dressing up clothes and a 'home corner'.

All of these provide opportunities for language development where the children can talk freely, to each other and also to adults. 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. By providing a wide variety of activities and equipment we help the children to develop within the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS).

### Basic Daily Routine (quite often changed around!)

08:50	Doors open
09:00	Welcome
	Free flow play & activity tables
09:30	Register
10:00	Snack Bar open
11:00	Snack bar closes
11:45	Story time
12:00	Morning session children collected by parents/carers & Lunch Time
12:45	Quiet time (½ hour for children staying for afternoon session)
1.15	Free flow play & activity tables
2.30	Tidy up time
2.45	Circle time & story
3:00	Children collected by parents/carers

Above all we want your child to be happy & have the opportunity to grow, learn and develop within the Pre-School environment.

# Ofsted

We were inspected in September 2009 and received a judgment of **Good**. You can view our latest inspection report at [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

## Ratios

All our staff are qualified to level 3 in Children's Care Learning & Development (CCLD) and the manager holds a level 4. All staff have current 1<sup>st</sup> Aid qualifications and have a current Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) check. We are able to accommodate a maximum of 24 children during each session. Children can start Little Steps Pre-School from the age of 2 years and will qualify for Nursery Education Funding from the term following their 3rd birthday.

## Our Partnership with you

**Starting Pre-School** can be a huge step for both you and your child, and as all children take to new experiences at their own pace in different ways, we want you to feel confident that your child is settling into this new environment comfortably. We encourage you to stay with your child for as many sessions as you feel necessary.

At Little Steps we operate a "Key Worker" system, whereby each member of staff is responsible for noting each child's approach to play and using this to contribute to planning for your child. The Key Worker will keep up to date records including photographs for your child and will be able to tell you how they have got on in a session or over a longer period of time. Each child has a diary for which to record significant learning or particular interests. We aim for this to be a two-way communication filled in by both the keyworker and you to ensure we plan to the best possible outcome for your child. If you wish to see your child's developmental records or have anything you would like to discuss with your Key Worker they will be happy to arrange a convenient time with you. We also hold parents evenings for you to talk with your child's keyworker and experience some of the opportunities your child has at pre-school.

We strongly believe that the children benefit from good partnerships with parents therefore we try to make sure we keep you well informed about what's going on at preschool so please take time to read or look at any of the information in your child's drawer or on the notice boards. These include our planned activities, Fundraising events, displaying the Parent Helper Rota and Staff information, Pre-school policies and procedures as well as our insurance documents.

We also distribute our '**Newsletter**' every half term to all parents. It tells you about forthcoming events, fundraising news, what our half term theme is. By working closely with you, we are better positioned to understand how to support you and your child.

### Parent help rota

We also run a **Voluntary Parent Helper Rota Scheme**, which is a wonderful opportunity for you to see how your child is progressing. Children love to see their parents helping out in this way and to share the various experiences they are having. You are welcome to take a turn once or twice each half term coming in for the morning or afternoon - if you have younger children or babies you are welcome to bring them along when you are helping

**Your child benefits from:** Realising their parents are interested in the group, seeing their parents are valued by the group, feeling special on the day you help out, learning to share you with other children

**You benefit from:** Seeing your child amongst his/her peers, being reassured about what happens in the session, making new friends, having a chance to copy or contribute ideas for play, not missing your child's 'magic moments' - making friends, dressing up, mastering scissors, storytelling and so on

**We benefit from:** An extra pair of hands, more activities are possible & new ideas, more time for us to talk and listen to children

**Research shows being involved in your child's learning environment is beneficial to both you and your child.**

# Policies & procedures

Included in this prospectus are the 5 main policies, that hopefully will enable you to make an informed choice for the care of your child. Our full policy document is available to you on our website. If you are unable to access technology then paper copies can be made available on request.

## Admissions policy

It is our intention to make our pre-school genuinely accessible to children and families from all sections of the local community. In order to accomplish this we will:

- Ensure the existence of the pre-school is widely known in all local communities. We will place notices advertising the pre-school in places where all sections of the community can see them.
- All applicants will be placed on our waiting list, which is arranged in order of date of application. All enquiries will be forwarded to the Registration Secretary.
- Notification will be made when a place is available.
- Describe the pre-school and its practices in terms which makes it clear that it welcomes both fathers and mothers, other relations and carers, including child minder's, and people from all cultural ethnic religious and social groups, with and without disabilities.
- Make our equal opportunities policy widely known.
- Consult with families about the opening times of the pre-school to avoid excluding anyone.
- Be flexible about attendance patterns so as to accommodate the needs of individual children and families.
- Pre-school has the right not to fill available spaces if circumstances dictate.

## Fees & Charging Poicy

Invoices for Pre-school will be sent out at the beginning of each half term. **Please make cheques payable to 'Little Steps Pre-School' or you can via internet banking.** Please speak to the Treasurer should you need to make alternative arrangement. Payment is due even in cases of absences or illness, except where the illness extends for more than 3 weeks or requires hospitalisation. Please speak to a Pre-school Leader or the Chairperson if there is to be a long period of absence as we may be able to waive the fees.

We ask that you send a deposit £12.50 (non-refundable) with your application form to secure your child's place. On the first day that your child starts at Little Steps they will receive a pre-school t-shirt, sunhat and bag.

### We are open 6 sessions per week (during term time)

<b>Monday &amp; Tuesday:</b>	<b>09:00 - 12:00</b>	<b>}</b>	
	<b>12:00 - 3:00</b>	<b>}</b>	
<b>Wednesday</b>	<b>09:00 - 12:00</b>	<b>}</b>	<b>£3.63 per hour</b>
<b>Thursday</b>	<b>09:00 - 12:00</b>	<b>}</b>	
	<b>12:00- 3:00</b>		
<b>Friday Toddler Group</b>	<b>10:00 - 11.45</b>		<b>£2.00 per family</b>

## Safeguarding Children Policy and Procedures

We intend to create in our Preschool an environment in which children are safe from harm and in which any suspicion of abuse is promptly and appropriately dealt with. In order to achieve this we will:

### **Ensure Child Protection by means of good practice**

- Adults who have not been CRB checked or cleared by OFSTED as a suitable person will not take children unaccompanied to the toilet or be left alone at any time.
- Adults will not be left alone for long periods with individual children or with small groups. An adult who needs to take a child aside - for example for time out after behavior that needs improvement - will leave the door ajar.
- Children will be encouraged to develop a sense of autonomy and independence through adult support in making choices and in finding names for their own feelings and acceptable ways to express them. This will enable children to have the self-confidence and the vocabulary to resist inappropriate approaches.
- The layout of the playroom will permit constant supervision of all children.

### **Respond appropriately to suspicions of abuse**

We do realize that children have accidents and that when they are playing they often get bruised or grazed. However if staff suspects child abuse then the following must be actioned.

In all cases staff **must do** the following:

- Treat the matter seriously and reassure the child
- React with belief what the child tells you
- Make it clear that you will have to inform other people, that you cannot keep it a secret
- Tell only those that need to know
- Keep a careful watch on the child but don't smother them
- Make an accurate record of what was noticed/said on what happened and what you have done. Use the child's own words when recording.
- If a child makes a disclosure to you, reassure the child it is not their fault
- Tell the child what action you must take and why

Staff **will not**:

- Promise to keep the matter secret. The child has trusted you; you do not want to break that trust.
- Do not tell the parent, this is the duty of the supervisor, proprietor or social services.
- Do not interrogate the child or ask leading questions.

### **Keep Records**

Whenever worrying changes are observed in a child's behavior, physical condition or appearance, a specific confidential record will be set up, quite separate from the usual ongoing records of the child's progress and development. It is important that you tell us of any injury your child has had at home. We will ask you to fill in an existing injury form to tell us the details.

The record will include, in addition to the name, address and age of the child, timed and dated observations, describing objectively the child's behavior/appearance without comment or interpretation; where possible, the exact words spoken by the child, the dated name and signature of the recorder.

Such records will be kept in a separate file and will not be accessible to people in the Preschool other than the leader, chair, key worker or child protection liaison officer as appropriate.

### **Liaise with other bodies**

The Preschool operates in accordance with local authority guidelines. Confidential records kept on children about whom the Preschool is anxious will be shared with the Children's Social Care through Somerset Direct 08453459122 if the preschool feels that adequate explanations for changes in the child's condition have not been provided.

If a report on a child is to be made to the authorities, the child's parents will be informed at the same time as the report is made.

We reserve the right in cases of suspected child abuse that we may report our concerns without first seeking your permission if by withholding or not reporting such information, this could lead to endangering the child's or member of staff's safety.

We refer to the Somerset Safeguarding Children Booklet (Orange) attached to the noticeboard in the small room. Staff will update training every 3 years as recommended.

The group will maintain ongoing contact with the registering authority, including names, addresses and telephone numbers of individual social workers, to ensure that it would be easy, in any emergency, for the preschool and the social services department to work well together. Records will also be kept of the local NCPCC contact or any other contacts as appropriate.

### **Support families**

The preschool will take every step in its power to build up trusting and supportive relationships between families and staff and volunteers in the group.

Where abuse at home is suspected, the preschool will continue to welcome the child and family while investigations proceed.

Confidential records kept on a child will be shared with the child's parents.

With the proviso that the care and safety of the child must always be paramount, the preschool will do all in its power to support and work with the child's family.

### **Exclude known abusers**

It will be made clear to applicants for posts with the Preschool that the position is exempt from the provisions of the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974.

All applicants for work within the Preschool, whether voluntary or paid, will be interviewed before an appointment is made and will be asked to provide at least one reference. All such references will be followed up. In the case of applicants with unexplained gaps in their employment history, or have moved rapidly from one job to another, explanations will be sought.

All appointments, both paid and voluntary, will be subject to a probationary period and will not be confirmed unless the Preschool is confident that the applicant can be safely entrusted with children.

All employed staff, voluntary staff, members of the committee and parent helpers will be CRB checked.

### **Seek and supply training**

We will seek out training opportunities for all adults involved in the group to ensure that they recognize the symptoms of possible physical abuse, neglect, emotional abuse and sexual abuse.

### **Monitor the Use of Technology including photography and mobile phones**

There is increasing concern, not just nationally but world wide, about the use of the internet to abuse and exploit children and vulnerable adults. Computer technology, including web cams and mobile phones, is being used in the production and widespread distribution of images and pseudo images of the abuse of children and vulnerable adults. Due to the potential misuse of photographic and video/camera/mobile phone data the following procedures are to be implemented in permitting photography to take place or video/digital etc cameras to be used in certain situations.

It is the policy of Little Steps Pre-school that during pre-school sessions, no photographic, video/camera/mobile phone data/images are taken, without written consent of the parent.

Always ensure that you are aware of the policy underpinning the taking of and use of material within the building/open spaces that you intend to take images within.

- Photographs are only used for the purposes of observations & assessment as an important way of showing a broad view of a child's development, publicity in the media or the Little Steps website, or for the children to review what they have done and achieved.
- Only the pre-school camera is used for these purposes. Staff's own camera or mobile phone are not to be used and photos are downloaded onto the pre-school computer only.
- Photos taken by Little Steps will be kept and stored on file for up to 5 years and only used for the purpose of consented publication and usage.
- Occasionally photographs may be stored on a memory stick for the purpose of uploading to the website by the Pre-school Leader or member of the committee as no internet connection is available at the Village Hall. These are then deleted after use.
- Ensure CDs and portable files/photographs are kept within lockable cabinets.
- Images are not passed electronically to a third party who has not been identified to the parent or guardian as a third party involved in the original usage of the material.
- Images are not passed to any other family member or friend of the child and vulnerable adults.
- If unsure ask for guidance from the Pre-school Leader.

All personal mobile phones are to be switched off during pre-school sessions. A locked cupboard in the kitchen is available to secure personal possessions.

In an emergency staff can be contacted on the Pre-school mobile Tel no: 07745229438

## Behaviour Management Policy

We believe that children and adults flourish best in an ordered environment in which everyone knows what is expected of them and children are free to develop their play and learning without fear of being hurt or hindered anyone else. We aim to work towards a situation in which children can develop self-discipline and self-esteem in an atmosphere of mutual respect and encouragement.

In order to achieve this:

- Rules governing the conduct of the group and the behaviour of children will be discussed and agreed within the Pre-School and explained to all newcomers, both children and adults.
- All adults in the Pre-School will ensure that the rules are applied consistently, so that children have the security of knowing what to expect and can build up useful habits of behaviour.
- All adults will try to provide a positive model for the children with regard to friendliness, care and courtesy.
- Adults in the Pre-School will praise and endorse desirable behaviour such as kindness and willingness to share.
- We will take positive steps to avoid a situation in which children receive adult attention only in return for undesirable behaviour.

When children behave in unacceptable ways:

- Physical punishment such as smacking or shaking will be neither used nor threatened.
- Children will never be sent out of the room by themselves.
- Techniques intended to single out and humiliate individual children such as the 'naughty chair' will not be used.
- Children who misbehave will be given one to one adult support in seeing what was wrong and working towards a better pattern.
- Where appropriate this might be achieved by a period of 'time out' with an adult.
- In cases of serious misbehaviour, such as bullying, racial or other abuse, the unacceptability of the

behaviour will be made clear immediately, but by means of explanations rather than personal blame.

- In any case of misbehaviour, it will always be made clear to the child or children in question that it is the behaviour not the child that is unwelcome.
- Adults will not shout or raise their voices in a threatening way.

Adults in the preschool will make themselves aware of, and respect, a range of cultural expectations regarding interactions between people.

Any behaviour problems will be handled in a developmentally appropriate fashion, respecting individual children's level of understanding and maturity.

Adults will be aware that some kinds of behaviour may arise from a child's special needs.

If a child's behaviour gives us cause for concern, parents will be informed and the situation discussed.

We will observe and record the child's behaviour over a given length of time and an action plan will be drawn up with consultation with the parent.

If necessary, with parental permission, outside professional guidance will be sought.

The Pre-School reserves the right to ask the parent to withdraw a child should the child become too destructive however every effort will be made to make sure that this does not occur.

Parents are asked not to discuss their child's or any other children's behaviour in front of the children.

Above all we will help build a child's self esteem, a child who feels valued is more likely to behave and develop the social skills to help them be accepted and welcomed into the society which they grow up in.

## Complaints procedure

Our Pre-School believes that children and parents are entitled to expect courtesy and careful attention to their needs and wishes. We welcome suggestions on how to improve our pre-school and will give prompt and serious attention to any concerns about the running of the pre-school.

We believe that most complaints are made constructively and can be sorted out at an early stage. We also believe that it is in the best interest of the Pre-School and parents that complaints should be taken seriously and dealt with fairly and in a way which respects confidentiality. However, should the Pre-School be unable to resolve an issue we list below the address and telephone number of the complaints department for our Regulatory Body Ofsted:-

The National Business Unit  
Ofsted  
Piccadilly Gate  
Stove Street  
MANCHESTER M1 2WD  
Helpline: 0300 123 1231

## Toddler Group

Little steps recognise that children's social interaction is important from a very early age, and that being able to mix with others in a safe environment stimulates imaginative play that we enrich with the right equipment. As a result we have our own specific toys geared to the younger child, but still have access to all the activities needed to stretch young minds, such as paint, clay and water play that are usually just provided for pre-school aged groups.

**Little Steps Toddler Group** operates every **Friday from 10.00 - 11.45** in the **Village Hall**

Mums, Dads, Grandparents and carers are part of our group too, and enjoy staying and making friends while their children play and form their own friendships. Having one of the pre-school staff running the toddler group is an ideal way of making links between toddlers and pre-school therefore ensuring a smooth transition if your child does move on to Little Steps. There is a link with our Pre-school in their outings, parties and festivals as well as fundraising together.

Fees for the Toddler Group are **£2.00 per family**, per session, which also includes refreshments for everyone and is payable on the day on a 'pay and play' basis - no need to pre book.

**If you would like more information on this group please do not hesitate to contact us**

### And finally .....The Committee

Our Pre-school is run by a committee of parents who have regular monthly meetings.

We have a host of exciting fund raising events throughout the year including sponsored walks, race nights, and our annual halloween disco and cheese & wine evening. These are advertised on our 'Committee' notice board so keep a look out for them. New faces are always welcome - and help and new ideas are always appreciated, as any money raised is used to benefit all the children at the Pre-school.

**Please remember that without a committee and your assistance the Pre-school and Toddler Group could not function.**

### Useful Telephone numbers

Helen Barham	Pre-School Leader	07745 229438
Sharon Hooper	Chairperson	07760161396
Ceri Whatley	Secretary	07812766992
Linsey Irish	Health & Safety rep	01278 663440
Andrea Grindrod	Treasurer	07984411422
Caroline El-Abar	Administrator	07831727985
North Newton Community Primary School		01278 662140
North Petherton Community Primary School		01278 662442
North Petherton Surgery		01278 662223
North Petherton Library		01278 663617
Early Years County Hall - Taunton		01823 355455
Ofsted		0300 123 1231

# Little Steps Pre-School is about:

**F**orming new friendships

**U**nderstanding our world

**N**ew experiences

**and lots more.....**

Please feel free to visit us during session times or contact  
Helen Barham on 07745 229 438 for further information.

*We look forward to welcoming you and your child to our Pre-School*