

The Early Bird Pre-School Wheathampstead Newsletter



March 2024



Term	Dates	Half Term	Setting Closed
Spring 2024	Mon 8 th Jan–Thurs 28 th March	19 th – 23 rd February	Friday 5 th Jan – closed, staff training Friday 29 th March – Good Friday Bank Holiday
Summer 2024	Mon 15 th April – Thurs 18 th July	27 th – 31 st May	Monday 6 th May – closed, bank holiday

Dates for your diary:

Summer Term 2024

- Monday 8th – Friday 12th April – Holiday Club 9am – 3pm
- Monday 15th of April – World Art Day
- Monday 22nd of April – Earth Day
- Tuesday 23rd of April – St George's Day
- Tuesday 23rd of April – The arrival of our duck eggs which will be due to hatch on the 24th-15th April
- Saturday 27th of April – Family play and Exploration Group 10am-12pm
- w/c 13th of May – National Smile Month begins – we will have a “love your smile” week
- Friday 17th of May – Pyjamarama Day (Book Trust)
- Sunday 19th of May – Wheathampstead 2k/10k run
- Monday 20th of May – World Bee Day
- Saturday 1st of June – Family Play and Exploration Group – 10am – 12pm
- Saturday 6th July – Family Play and Exploration Group 10am – 12pm
- 15th-18th of July – Graduation week
- Friday 19th of July – Summer Party, all children welcome with an adult (Setting will be open for the summer party only).



The Early Bird Pre-School Wheathampstead latest news . . .

We wanted to start off this newsletter by thanking all the children, parents and families that took part in our sponsored treasure hunt. We have raised £295, which has gone towards a duck experience, supplied by Incredible eggs. On the day of the delivery of duck eggs, the company ensure the equipment is set up correctly and provide us with lots of information and learning resources for the children. The ducklings will usually hatch within three to four days in an incubator and we will then transfer them into their brooding unit. The children will have the opportunity to watch the ducklings hatch, name them, feed and care for them, handle the ducklings under adult supervision and even watch them as they have a splash around in a pool. We have also arranged for our Family Play and Exploration Group to tie in with this experience.

Our weekly STEM activities have proven to be very popular this term, so marking British Science week was lots of fun. The children were able to explore fossils by making their own. They used a range of tools to flatten, roll and manipulate their clay, then chose a dinosaur to make patterns and imprint their footprints, heads and tails. This then lead to lots of play in the garden relating to dinosaurs and fossils, the children set up their own rock cleaning station using water and paintbrushes. We looked closely at the different colours and patterns and the children made predictions on what the rocks were called and how old they were. . We also created our own dinosaur eggs using bicarbonate soda and food coloring, which the children later dissolved using white vinegar

To help promote children's understanding of the world we have explored beans using a magnifying glass, looking at the patterns and colours that could be seen on each seed. There was a discussion on what their beans needed to grow and then they planted their own using a Ziplock bag, with some wet paper towel and then we stuck them to the window so they could observe the growth and changes. We also took a trip to the river, where we used lots of mathematical language looking at the depth of the water and spent time dropping sticks one side of the river and seeing how quickly it would travel to the other side. We had experienced lots of rain in the build up to our trip, which meant there were lots of muddy puddles for the children and teachers to jump in causing lots of hilarity.

To support children's communication and language we have been practicing a weekly Makaton sign this term, during our end of session group activity. it has been lovely to see how excited the children have been to learn the signs and to see them using them during the session. The signs have been thank you, duck, bear, friends, dragon, monkey, book, help, spring and Happy Easter. We feel it is important for the children to learn Makaton as it provides children with a tool to communicate when they are unable or have not yet acquired the skill of verbal communication. The children have also been supported with their literacy by supporting their love of books, story telling and singing. We have celebrated World Book Day by dressing up as their favourite characters and taking part in lots of story based activities over the half term.

New Funding for Working Families

From April 2024, 15 hours free childcare will be available to working parents of two-year-olds. If your child turns 2 on or before 31st March 2024 you can apply for this funding NOW at www.childcarechoices.gov.uk

Early Bird Wish List

If you are planning a spring clean/cupboard sort out we would be very grateful for any donations of out of date herbs, spices, pulses and rice. The children at Early Bird's enjoy lots of sensory play and adding different smells and textures to playdough.



Special Events

"Love your smile week" as part of National smile month – w/c 13th of May

More information to come in the new term.

Pyjamarama Day – Friday 17th of May

Children are invited to come dressed in their pyjamas or onesies. We will be sharing lots of stories and enjoying story-themed activities.



Reminders

We will be handing out sunscreen permission slips at the beginning of the new term which allow us to apply sunscreen to your child during the session, if you wish. We would still encourage parents/carers to apply sunscreen before the session as the weather gets warmer. .



Classroom Changes

We are delighted to announce that we have been awarded a grant towards adapting our classroom to make 2 bespoke areas for the children. One area will be for our very youngest children and will be called the nest room. This will be very geared towards a caring and nurturing approach to the children's care and education supporting their prime areas of learning (personal, social and emotion development, physical development and communication and language). They will have access to a sleep area and separate area allocated in the outside classroom.

The other area will be called our fledgling room and will be geared towards a challenging and ambitious curriculum across the prime (see above) and specific areas of learning (literacy, maths, understanding the world and expressive arts and design). Ella, our Qualified Teacher will lead the curriculum in this room ensuring that play, outdoor learning and exciting provocations are at the heart of our up to date and evidence based pedagogy (how we deliver our curriculum).

The adaption of our classroom will be completed in two phases as follows:-

Phase one – implemented in the Summer term 2024.

- The classroom will be divided into two separate areas with our youngest children being in the nest room and the older children being in the fledgling room.
- New transition into and out of the classroom will be trialled. Details of this will be put onto Tapestry over the Easter holidays and the staff will be on hand to guide you through this at the start of the summer term.
- The separation of the outside area will start and be developed and fine tuned over the summer term.

Phase two - implemented at the start of Autumn term 2024.

- Early Bird registration will include taking under two's into our nest room.
- Work to our plumbing systems allowing access to water in the nest room will be completed and decoration and adaptations will be completed making it fully open and operational for our youngest children.
- The fledgling inside and outside classrooms will be completed and fully operational in time for the start of term.

The Early Bird Pre-School Wheathampstead Team

Denise – Director, Early Years Manager, SENCO & DSL (Level 6)

Ella – Setting Leader, Health and Safety Officer, EYFS Lead & DSP (Level 6)

Dawn – Deputy Setting Leader and SENCO (Level 3)

Lyndsey - Senior Early Years Educator & DSP (Level 3)

Emma – Early Years Educator (Level 3)

Fiona – Early Years Educator (Level 3)

Sarah – Early Years Educator (Level 2)

Mary – Early Years Educator (Level 3)

Anna – Early Years Helper

Niki – Early Years Helper (bank staff)

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