

# Little Hands Nursery School

## Information Booklet

This is your child's first step into the world of formal education, taken during their most receptive years. At "Little Hands", we appreciate that your child's Nursery School days experiences will provide the basis for starting school. It is essential that these are happy times for your child, so that confidence, independence and social skills can develop properly.

Little Hands Nursery Schools offer activities that are fun, giving opportunity for success, developing confidence, independence and acquiring new skills in preparation for full time education.

Simply put it is "Learning Through Play"

This booklet will give you the basic information to prepare both you and your child for starting at "Little Hands". If you agree to abide by the terms and policies set out in it please confirm this by signing, dating and returning the admission form.

## Starting at "Little Hands"

Your child's first day at Nursery School can seem a little daunting for both child and parents, especially if the child has never been left before. Because of this the "Little Hands" staff will work closely with you to decide on the best format for your child's first day.

At "Little Hands" we believe that each child is an individual and that consequently every child will have a different requirement on their first day. We also believe that you know your child best, and so although we offer help and guidance we take your lead as to how quickly you would like to leave your child.

We advise that you make one or two pre-admission visits to the Nursery School with your child, close to their starting date. This enables them to familiarise themselves with the Nursery School and it's routine together with a known person. The staff will then discuss with you whether you want to leave your child immediately on their start day or not. All that we do recommend is that the child is informed when you are leaving, since we find that a quick bye-bye from Mum, Dad or carer works better than trying to leave quickly and quietly when your child is busy which can lead to problems later. Once you have made the decision to leave your child we recommend that you carry it through for the half term as changes to the routine, once your child is prepared for it can be very confusing and distressing. Your child will have their own "key worker", a member of staff who will be their special friend during these initial sessions, giving one to one care if necessary.

Please remember that once you have left you can always telephone, as often as you like during the session to reassure yourself that your child is happy. In any case should a child become inconsolably distressed the staff will always contact the parents or carer.

We have a number of tried and tested policies for children who find settling difficult to help your child become used to being at the Nursery School without you. The staff, who have had many years experience settling children will advise you if necessary. Some children settle easily at first and then become unsettled weeks or even months later as if they have just discovered Mum and Dad is not with them. If this happens we simply begin the settling procedure over again until they are happy once more.

We like to welcome parents into the Nursery School, our families are very important to us. If you have any queries, worries or suggestions about how we may work better together please tell us.

If you agree to abide by the policies and information contained within this booklet please complete and sign the enclosed admissions and booking confirmation forms and return them to the Nursery School.

Thank You

Jane Marshall B.Sc., R.G.N., R.S.C.N.  
Proprietor

## Your Child's Day

Both morning and afternoon Nursery School Sessions are organised to a similar routine. Timetables for the sessions are available at the Nursery School, but each session contains the following elements :

### Free Play

A wide variety of toys and activities are laid out to allow the children the freedom to choose whatever they want to play with. Staff direct and guide the play. You may wish to settle your child during this period by, for example, doing a jigsaw with them.

### Registration and news time

The children all sit together for registration and for discussion regarding the date, the weather and the theme / topic for the week. The children are then encouraged to talk to the group with any news they might have.

### Activity

There is a planned activity, linked with the current theme / topic, every session. The activities are planned to practice a particular skill and usually, but not always, result in a piece of "work" for the children to either take home or display.

### Snack time

The children all sit together for juice and fruit, (milk is offered at Melbourn) helping with serving and clearing away.

### Play time

The children have either indoor or outdoor play using large physical play equipment.

### Story and songs

The children all sit together for a story, songs, music and movement.

This routine is always flexible to accommodate any necessary changes, such as visits from doctors, fire-fighters and the police.

## Special Sessions

### Pre-school Sessions

Pre-school sessions are available for those children who are due to start Primary School in the following academic year. The staff work with each child's individual capabilities to encourage confidence, independence and concentration ready for infant school. This is achieved using a variety of pre-reading, writing and numeracy techniques. Pre-school sessions are designed to be taken in conjunction with Nursery sessions.

### Lunch Sessions

The lunch session may be used to extend the length of either the morning or afternoon sessions or on an Ad-Hoc basis. It can therefore be taken up on the day of attendance, although it is recommended that you check in advance to ensure that places are available. If it is your intention for your child to attend lunch regularly then the fee will be included in the newsletter. If your child only attends occasionally then the fee will be added to the next half terms fees. Please ensure that your child's lunch box is named. The staff will ensure that all sandwiches and fruit etc. are eaten before any "treats". Although it may appear messy, we return the uneaten contents of the lunch box to you! This is so you can see exactly what your child has eaten and gauge how much your child needs at lunch time. Remember that your child has a mid morning and / or a mid afternoon snack so you need only pack enough food for lunch and not the whole day!

### Music Sessions

These sessions offer the child the opportunity to use a variety of musical instruments exploring sounds and musical patterns, participating in playing individually and as a group developing listening, social and fine motor skills.

"Little Movers" and "Little Gym" Sessions. "Little Movers" sessions focus on developing the children's motor skills, co-ordination and confidence whilst "Little Gym" sessions uses balancing and climbing along with ball games to develop physical skills and hand - eye co-ordination.

### "Little Feet" Club

"Little Feet" is our after Nursery School club which runs from 15.00 - 16.00 and enables parents to increase the length of the Nursery School afternoon session from two to three hours if desired. The session focuses on two areas; firstly, developing physical skills and hand - eye co-ordination using balancing and climbing equipment along with ball games and secondly, drama using story telling and role playing. Newton does not offer "Little Feet" sessions on Friday

### Holiday Club

Nursery opens 9am - 3pm during most of the school holidays offering full days or sessions of morning, lunch, or afternoon. Holiday club is open to brothers and sisters of children attending "Little Hands" up to the age of eight years. The holiday club is staffed by regular "Little Hands" staff to the usual staffing ratio. A separate booking form and invoice are issued for each holiday club.

The staff will be happy to discuss these sessions in more detail if required

## Snack Time

Snacks are served at mid-morning and mid-afternoon and are provided by the Nursery School. All the children have the same food and drink, except for any with specific feeding or allergy problems. We serve diluted fresh fruit juice and a variety of fresh or dried fruit and biscuits, Melbourn offers milk to drink. Please keep the staff informed if your child has any problems regarding food allergies. water is available to drink at all times.

## Going Home

During the session your child will usually have some "work". This could be anything from painting, models, cookery or write on work sheets, but the children are always very proud of what they have done. Occasionally they participate in group work which is to be left at the Nursery School, but on most sessions your child will have something to bring home. Their craft activity will be laid out on a table at going home time, ready for you to admire and collect. Please try not to forget it, however insignificant it may seem, as your child would have worked hard to create it.

At the end of the session we ask parents to wait in the lobby outside the Nursery School. A member of staff will admit all parents and carers together. Please ensure that you collect your child promptly. Although staff members remain after each session children can become quite distressed if they think they are being left. Please also ensure that you have all your child's belongings, hats coats scarves etc., with you when you leave . The Nursery School prefers to hand your child only to adults known to the Nursery School. In emergencies we will release your child to a different adult if we are advised by phone or letter beforehand.

## **Themes and Topics**

The Nursery School activities are organised around different themes or topics lasting between one week and half a term. You will be notified of the themes or topics half termly in advance in the newsletter, and your child may wish to bring a toy or book relating to that theme or topic into Nursery School. Please ensure that the staff are informed if any toy or book is special or breakable so we can help to keep it safe. We welcome visits from people related to the theme or topic chosen. For example a parent may visit to talk about their job or a grandparent may visit to talk about their hobby.

## **Parents Evenings**

Two parents evenings are held each year, one in winter and one in summer. These are held at the Nursery School and all of the available staff are present. This gives you the opportunity to discuss your child with the staff at the Nursery School without the distraction of your child being present.

## **Fees**

The fees are payable half termly, although it is possible to make other arrangements if necessary. You will be notified of the amount due by invoice at the beginning of each half term. Unless other arrangements have been made the fees are due within one month of the date of the invoice. A late payment penalty of £20.00 will be added to fees not paid within the half term. Fees are not refundable as, in the children's best interests it is necessary to organise and budget for the staffing in advance. If your child misses a session through illness or holiday, then it may be possible to make up the session on a different day, provided that a suitably staffed place is available. Any such make up sessions must be taken up in the same half term in which the missed session occurred and are offered entirely at the discretion of the Nursery School.

## **Early Years Education Funding**

All children are eligible for early years education funding in the term before their fourth birthday. This funding can be used towards payment of up to five sessions per week. The nursery deals with the application and sends detailed information to each family as their child becomes eligible. It is currently planned that Early Years Education Funding will be available to all three year olds by April 2004. At the moment the amount of funding does not cover the whole cost of a "Little Hands" session and top-up fees are charged. Full details of the funding are available from nursery.

## **Booking Sessions**

You will have been offered sessions for your child to attend. If these are not your ideal choice then we can place your child's name on a waiting list for your preferred session until one becomes available. Once sessions are booked they will remain your child's for the rest of the academic year. Extra sessions can be added to your child's week at any time, providing they are available. New booking forms are issued in January for the following academic year i.e. September to July; and these must be returned if you wish your child to remain at "Little Hands". This gives you the opportunity to change your child's sessions if necessary and plan ahead for the coming academic year.

## **Cancelling Sessions**

No booking fee or deposit is required to register your child at "Little Hands" but we do have a cancellation policy to ensure that planning and staffing are maintained to our high level. If you reduce your child's sessions or withdraw your child from Nursery altogether 7 term time weeks notice in writing must be given to the Nursery manager. Fees remain payable during the notice period whether or not your child attends.

## **Nursery School Clothing**

Please ensure that your child attends Nursery School with adequate clothing for outdoor play, including wellington boots, and make sure that all footwear and clothing is named. The children who attend Nursery School are often too young to recognise their clothes when they are similar to other peoples. Your child will have a named coat peg and personal items such as a change of clothes etc. can be left at the nursery School in a bag hung from the peg. In hot sunny weather it is advisable to leave a sun hat and apply sun blocking cream for outdoor play.

At the Nursery School the children enjoy many different craft activities and during this time every effort is made by the staff to protect the children's clothing. However we would not force your child to wear a coverall or exclude them from craft work if they strongly objected to wearing one.

All the paint and glue etc. used at "Little Hands" is claimed by the manufacturers to be washable. However, we have not always found this to be the case and strongly recommend that your child attends Nursery School in older clothes which you do not mind becoming a little messy.

## Philosophy

Our aim is to provide a happy, safe, caring and stimulating environment which promotes the all round development of the individual child, whatever their capabilities.

At "Little Hands" we can give more attention to all of our children as we operate a very high adult to child ratio.

## Curriculum

Our curriculum is planned working towards the Early Learning Goals as required by the Department of Education. The learning outcomes are designed to further all areas of a child's development and are summarised below ; with more information being available at the Nursery School if required.

### Personal, Social & Emotional Development

This is the most crucial area in which we are enabling the children to work in groups, learning independence, problem solving, differentiating right from wrong and showing sensitivity to the feelings of others.

### Communication

Here we are encouraging the children to express themselves in small and large groups, to listen to and make up stories, handle books, identify rhymes, recognise letters of the alphabet and identify and write their own name.

### Mathematical Development

In this area the children play number games, recognise numbers.

### Knowledge & Understanding of the World

We enable the children to observe and explore features of the living world, their families and the local environment, in both the past and the present.

### Physical Development

Here we help the child develop their fine and large motor skills, mobility and physical skills and their awareness of space and movement.

### Creative Development

This area we develop by exploring sound, colour, texture, form and space. The children are encouraged to use a variety of materials to express and represent their own ideas.

Should you require any area of the curriculum to be further explained our staff are always available to explain how all of the above are achieved through planned and assessed play, whilst having a lot of fun.

## **"Little Hands" Policies**

*Below are a summary of some of our policies. A complete document detailing all our policy statements which aims to ensure quality of service is available from the Nursery School. Please discuss any policy concerns with the nursery staff before signing the booking and admission forms as the nursery policies form the basis of parent/nursery contract.*

### **Health and Safety**

We aim to provide and maintain a healthy, safe environment for both the staff and the children in their care.

### **Equal Opportunities**

As we live in a multi racial, multi cultural society, no child will be discriminated against because of their race, colour, gender or ability.

### **Special Needs**

Children with special needs are welcomed. We are committed to providing equal opportunities and working in partnership with parents to formulate an individual education plan.

### **Child Protection**

All staff are vetted before taking up employment. They are trained to be alert to signs of abuse and guidelines are followed should it be suspected.

### **Staff**

All "Little Hands" staff have or are working towards relevant childcare qualifications and have extensive working experience with children in Primary and Nursery Schools. In addition all staff update their knowledge by attending regular training sessions. There are opportunities for students and adults with special needs to gain work experience with us. First aid certificates are obtained and reviewed when necessary. All staff are checked by the Criminal Records Bureau to ensure their suitability.

### **Discipline**

The ethos of the Nursery School is to create a caring environment where good behaviour and consideration for others is actively encouraged. If a child behaves inappropriately, they are encouraged to consider the effects of their actions on others and gently redirected to another activity. We make it clear that the behaviour and not the child is disapproved of.

### **Allergies**

Current lists of all children's allergies and dietary needs are kept in key places throughout the nursery. Staff refer to the lists when planning any activity. It is therefore the parents responsibility that staff are fully informed of each child's allergy and dietary needs and that this is updated when necessary.

## Little Hands" Policies continued

### **Photos and Videos**

The nursery regularly takes photos of the children at play, mostly to support the curriculum planning. These photos are often shared with parents on the photo board and are always available on request. The nursery also occasionally videos the group to show at parents evenings.

### **Walks and Outings**

Nursery occasionally takes the children for short walks out of the nursery grounds. The children are always accompanied by a high level of staff and safety policies observed. Nursery only organises outings at which the parents are present and are fully responsible for their child and details for these outings are given out as they occur.

### **Illness**

Please do not send your child to Nursery School if they are suffering from an infectious illness such as chicken pox, diarrhoea, sickness, conjunctivitis; or if they have a temperature, head lice or thread worm. It is not fair to either your child or those of others. It is also a requirement of our registration that the staff do not allow a child to attend Nursery School if they think they have an infectious illness. Also children should remain at home for 24 hours after the symptoms have subsided.

If your child becomes ill during a session the staff will give appropriate first aid or care while the parents or carers are contacted. It is, therefore very important that the contact numbers on the admission form are kept up to date.

In the unlikely event of a more serious accident, the staff, who are first aid trained will take all reasonable steps to care for your child; ultimately arranging for them to be taken to hospital. Your written consent for the staff to deal with accidents is sought on the admission form.

Should your child require any long term medication (e.g.: for epilepsy) then it may be possible for this to be administered at the Nursery School. Please discuss this with the staff.

It is helpful to the Nursery School staff if you can contact us should your child be unable to attend Nursery School on any particular day.

## Communication Books

On starting at the Nursery School your child will receive a communication book. This book is intended for both the staff and yourself to write in. Although there are always staff available to discuss any problems or queries, it is sometimes useful to write down any anecdotes e.g. exciting days out or points concerning your child.

The staff write in the book approximately twice each half term to inform you of your child's progress and experiences at the Nursery School. You will also receive information about future themes / topics, term dates and special events in the half termly newsletter.

In order to help the staff quickly establish a rapport with your child, please write some details of your family and your child's daily routine in the communication book.

Please leave the communication book with the session leader when you have written in it, or when you would like it to be updated. The book will be left with your child's work when it is ready for collection.

## Toileting

The children are supervised when going to the toilet, but their independence is developed by encouraging them to do as much for themselves as they can. Please have a change of clothes in a named bag on your child's peg in case of accidents during toileting, or with water play and craft activities. The Nursery School does have spare clothes available but children often prefer their own clothes should they need to be changed. It is also advisable to dress the children in clothes that they can manage easily themselves e.g. Pull on trousers and Velcro shoes.

If your child still wears nappies, please leave spare nappies in a named bag on your child's peg, and restock the bag when necessary. When you decide to toilet train your child, then please inform the staff and we can continue at the Nursery School to prevent your toilet training being disrupted.

# Little Hands Nursery Schools

## Little Hands Nursery School - Bourn

The Village Hall

Short Street

Bourn

Cambridgeshire

CB3 7SG

Tel : 07708 061575 (during school hours) 01223 503972 (at other times)

## Little Hands Nursery School - Linton

The Station House

Station Road

Linton

Cambridgeshire

CB16NW

Tel : 01223 897945 (during school hours) 01223 503972 (at other times)

## Little Hands Nursery School - Melbourn

The Moor

Melbourn

Nr. Royston

Hertfordshire

SG8 6ED

Tel : 01763 260964 (during school hours) 01223 503972 (at other times)

## Little Hands Nursery School - Newton

Newton Hall

Town Street

Newton

Cambridgeshire

CB2 5PE

Tel : 01223 872796 (during school hours) 01223 503972 (at other times)