

Once Upon a Time



DAYCARE

Issue 2

www.onceuponatimedaycare.co.uk



2023 as a whole

What a year it has been here at Once Upon A Time!
Thank you as always to all of our wonderful families for an incredible year. Full of exciting events, celebrations and of course our first Ofsted inspection for Dronfield.

We have celebrated Chinese new year, eating Chinese cuisine, exploring Chinese dragons and the Chinese dragon dance. We loved valentines, we had an egg-citing easter. World book day was out of this world full of lots of literacy activities and fancy dress. Trips to the supermarket, the museum. We celebrated the Kings Coronation, watched eggs hatch. Our preschoolers graduated and left to go to school, we have welcomed so many new families.

We hosted our numerous Come Dine With Me sessions with our chefs when we launched a new menu, held a Halloween pumpkin competition, but most importantly our children have had fun, whilst learning, thriving and developing in a safe, stimulating environment full of laughter, care and close working relationships with our family. We are so very proud of each and every one of our children for their accomplishments this year!

— Our Nurseries



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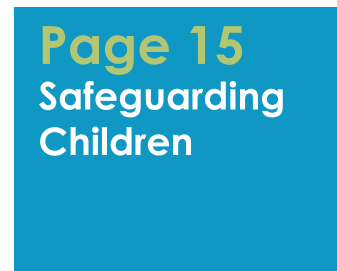
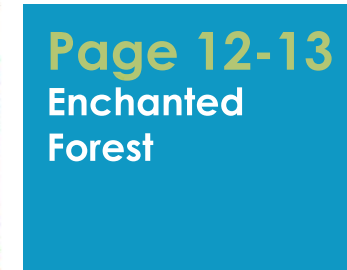
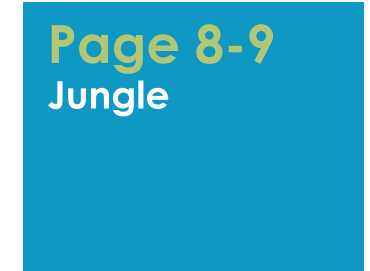
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— Stay In Touch And Share With Us



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Settling into nursery

We understand that for parents and carers, leaving your baby at nursery for the first time can be a huge emotional challenge. Our baby room practitioners have the responsibility of making them feel safe and happy as well as your baby.

We may have settled hundreds of babies before, but we understand that you are leaving the most precious thing in their whole world for the first time, with people you don't really know that well. We are mindful that we are not just settling your baby; we're settling you the parents as well. We have parents that call 10 times a day, we have some that just want to stay in reception for a while until they feel they can leave them, however our families are feeling we support and understand this huge step for you and your little one.

Together with each family, we create a dialogic environment in which we the practitioners are equal partners with yourself. So, making sure that practitioners are seen as significant members of our room for babies, and our parents are equally important, is vital to us. And within all of that is the baby, the central feature that everybody is trying to ensure is happy, safe and secure.

From starting strong, with the 1 hour settle with your babies key worker and parent/carer, finding out everything about your baby. From routine, to likes and dislikes, to culture, religions and beliefs. It's a wonderful time for the parent/carer to really bond and get to know the person that will be taking care of their most precious thing. This 1 hour session is key to that first step to building the trust and confidence in your babies journey with someone new.

Keeping in touch, is vital and something we take pride in. Especially in those early days. Using our Family app, we send regular photos and comments on how our babies are getting on. What they have eaten, how they have slept, bowel movements and also all the wonderful activities and things they get up too.

Respect, we are completely respectful of our parents and carers, their wishes, beliefs and in-tent with choices. But what we feel is important is us ensuring we are equal partners. Therefore, sharing ideas, how we can work together, child centred approach and how we can make sure that nursery is completely mirroring home life wherever possible. Our nursery teams work very hard on building those strong bonds, not only with their key worker but also other practitioners within the room, this is to ensure on key workers absence there is someone else there they have a bond with.

Our Dronfield site also hosted their first baby club this year which was a huge success and we hope to host more of these at both sites in 2024. This 1 hour session allowed families that are new to the setting with a baby under 18 months, or families soon to join us to come together meet each other, meet some of the team, explore some activities and have a play. Building a family style foundation really helps our nursery become a community and it is so important that all parents and carers feel supported.



Under The Sea

This is a huge year for our children, after your child's 1st birthday their transition from babies to toddlers with shaky first steps give way to confident walking and climbing. From babbling to forming words, and gaining more control over their hand eye coordination. Our Under The Sea rooms are purpose built, with age and stage appropriate resources and planned activities to build on their skills to ensure they are learning and developing in an enabling environment.

Our Under The Sea room begin to make big gains in understanding language and figuring out how to communicate. Many children say their first words and point to ask for something or to get help. They may also follow directions when given with both words and a gesture. Reading continues to be important. Our little ones can follow along with a story and point to objects in the pictures as you name them.

Reading books together and talking about and the things we did that day. We begin to ask questions and encourage your toddler to reply by waiting for a response, then expand on those replies.

Hand-eye coordination and fine motor skills continue to develop they begin to gain more control, challenge themselves and also show interest in smaller fine motor planned activities. With better control over fingers and hands, children in this learn to scribble and try to use switches, buttons, and knobs. Choose busy boxes and other age-appropriate toys for them to explore.



As a baby, your child "played" with toys by shaking, banging, or throwing them. As children enter our Under The Sea room they will begin to use things the right way, so are more likely to stack blocks, listen or talk into a toy phone, or push a toy car.

Children at this stage begin to enjoy having other children around. They often copy other children while playing. They may play cooperatively with each other although they may not be thrilled about sharing toys. We offer plenty of toys and resources for everyone and also encourage them to share and take turns.

Before our children transition to our Jungle room, we discuss their development with you our parents and carers to discuss the right time to transition and how this will look for your little one. It isn't a one size fits all, therefore we work with our children and the parents and carers to ensure that they are happy, comfortable and supported. The key worker will go on the visits to help them settle and introduce them to their new key worker, again, building that bond and relationship before they move completely.





The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) requires every child between the ages of 2–3 years have their development assessed & evaluated. Your child's key worker will write a short summary detailing the child's development as a learner, and identify areas that they may need to work on through a progress check.

The 2 year check focuses on progress in three areas of learning: Personal, Social and Emotional Development, Physical Development and Communication and Language.

To properly evaluate progress, we consider the observations made during everyday learning activities in their environment. These insights are to be taken into account during the progress check. The summary is evaluated based on the knowledge, skills, understanding and behaviour that has been independently and consistently shown in our setting and at home.



In The Jungle

The summary notes where the child is doing well, and describes the learning areas that re-quire for further development and improvement. It also provides strategic actions that can be undertaken to address these developments.

The two-year progress check is an opportunity for parents, guardians, carers and professionals to come together and collaboratively review where a child is on their learning journey.

It identifies their strengths, interests, and any further support or intervention required. Although each child is unique and progresses at their own pace, it's important to take into account where there may be an indication of a special developmental need or disability and work together to support the child as effectively as possible.

Valuable insights at this stage can be utilised to plan learning sessions, activities and curate targeted actions in order to propel the child forward in their development. Where applicable, practitioners can offer services for further information and support such as health visitors, family support services, speech and language therapists and occupational therapy. Having an overall view of a child's development at this stage is key to creating the best strategy to prioritise certain learning opportunities and ensure the child gets all the support they need.

We are beginning to contact health visitors to ensure we are sharing information with all pro-fessionals working with each child. This is one of the reasons we ask for this information on your first day as a collaborative approach is in the best interest of your child. Our working in part-nership sessions are also crucial as we get your insight as the primary carer for your child, be-cause as you are probably aware children can be different in different environments and with different people.

Little Kingdom

At our Ecclesall road site, our Little Kingdom room provides our rising 3's time to really focus on those independence skills before venturing out to our pre-school rooms (Enchanted Forest).

Young children love to do things for themselves. Here are just a few ways in which we work with your children to build independence. Learning to follow routines is one way for little ones to become more independent. For example, when coming in from outside, children take off their coats, take off their wellies, put on their shoes and wash their hands. We provide support but allow them to try and find easy methods to help children begin to do these things independently. This may build from unzipping their coat. Eventually, they'll be able to do the whole routine alone.

Assigning roles is another great way which we help to build on their independence. In this room we may ask a child to give out cups for milk for snack. Or give a small group of children an area to tidy.

Another way to build confidence is by giving your child choices. For example, after group time we may give children the choice of 2 activities. This gives children pride and allows them to consider their own thoughts.

Being play based, children are able to access a wealth of experiences at their own leisure. This means they are able to engage in projects, like puzzles or crafts, which allows them to learn to focus on one thing for a long time. Free play is also a chance for children to learn creativity and problem solving.



We as practitioners get involved with their learning, showing them, we are interested, engaging and supporting where needed but also allowing them to take the lead! Scaffolding that learning, which means we may begin by helping and supporting or directing, then gradually allowing them to take control and gain confidence and independence to explore and expand on their own learning through testing ideas and theories.

Toilet training, in this room we have free access to the toilet/potty to promote and encourage that independence, but we are aware that not all children are potty trained by this time. Being excited about using the toilet and with the encouragement from friends and practitioners, this is a real focus in this room for those that aren't quite there yet. Children's interest in the toilet and potty training is vital, and we will work with our families to ensure we are all working together.



Enchanted Forest

School readiness is the main focus for our pre-school room. Play based learning, with more structure and focused play based challenges to ensure children are building those listening and attention skills, communication and language and also regulating their emotions.

The EYFS defines School Readiness as 'the broad range of knowledge and skills that provide the right foundation for good future progress through school and life.' This definition can lead to a lot of confusion as it is very vague. Not every child will possess the same knowledge and skills when they start school, so it's about understanding what is 'nor-mal' for your child and working out how you can best support their next steps and prepare them for the transition.

For example, if they are struggling with his/her reading skills, what actions can you put in place to help?

This might involve reading with children on a one to one basis so that they can follow along with the words on the page or simply become familiar with words and

It's also important to remember that every young learner develops at their own pace, There-for we view the skills that define school readiness as more of a guide, rather than a definitive list of what your child must achieve before they start school.

The best way to describe school readiness in EYFS is to understand how 'ready' children are physically, emotionally, and intellectually to start school. Whilst there are various interpreta-tions of this term, essentially it's about understanding how prepared your child is to integrate positively into the school setting without having a parent or family member present and/or in a larger ratio than nursery.

We create/provide a range of challenging and meaningful learning opportunities which al-low children to test different ideas and concepts. Experimentation is key for school readiness, as through trial and error, children find things out for themselves which leads to a deeper level of understanding. Instead of being told what is the right/ wrong way to do something, they are free to find this out first-hand. You should also give them praise and encouragement when they do some-thing right, as this increases the likelihood of them doing it again.

The following skills are what we work on with our preschoolers in our everyday routine to help their core skills prepare for the transition:

- Playing cooperatively with peers
- Following direction
- Working independently
- Sharing and taking turns
- Initiating and maintaining conversations
- Listening and concentrating
- Taking care of their own belongings
- Showing empathy for other people's emotions and feelings
- Following rules/ directions
- Managing their own feelings and expressing them appropriately
- Toilet training



It is important to remember that not all of these skills we be imbedded, but what is important to us is they are identified and we work on them together collaboratively to ensure we are preparing our preschoolers for the transition.

SEND

This year we have invested into lots of new sensory resources to support need across the whole nursery. In particular our sensory room (located in the little kingdom room).

What are the benefits of a sensory room you may ask?

The benefits of sensory rooms are manifold. They provide a tranquil space where children can retreat from the sensory overload of the classroom environment. This can significantly reduce stress and anxiety, allow children to regulate, thereby enhancing the overall quality of their experience with us. This space is not only beneficial for our children with special educational and physical needs, but all children are also able to access this space in small groups.

We have a high number of professionals who visit us that complement the work we put in with individual children before further referral and help is needed. This is to ensure that the children are receiving the best support and help at the earliest point. Covering observations and strategies that normally an external professional would do before moving onto the next stage helps speed the process long and also allows the professionals to try new strategies or further referrals for help if required. This is down to the hard work and experience our SENDCO Megan Batty has and the work and experience of our staff team with SEND. We are very proud of our work with children with special educational needs and disabilities along with the work we put in with our families to ensure they are also supported through the process.



Safeguarding Children

Safeguarding children is everyone's responsibility.

Effective safeguarding ensures that all children are safe, protected, and their needs are met.

Some of the most vulnerable people in society are the very youngest, so we need to get it right from the beginning of a child's journey.

The Best Start for Life government document (2021) states the first "1,001 days are a critical time for development, but they are also a time when babies are at their most vulnerable. Babies do not yet have the language skills to advocate for themselves so their carers must advocate on their behalf."

Did you know....

- That everyone of our staff workforce are Level 3 qualified in Safeguarding children.
- That everyone of our staff workforce complete annual training on safeguarding, safer sleeping for babies, attachment theory, radicalization and extremism and FGM.
- That all of our staff team are trained in pediatric first aid.

Our Safeguarding leads are Samijo Street and Rebecca Street and the safeguarding deputies are Megan Batty and Fiona Gallagher.



HEY

The Healthy Early Years (HEY) Award is aimed at early years providers ensuring they are pro-moting and educating staff, children and their families of what a healthy lifestyle is, exploring a variety of common issues such as healthy eating, how much activity should we be doing each day, good sleep hygiene, immunisation, oral health, and cutting down on screen-time.

As part of the award process, our HEY lead Samijo Street has worked across the nursery ensuring that our children are provided with not only balanced diet, opportunities to be active, providing information about different groups, information in the local community for our families, guidance and help with specific areas such as oral health, healthy choices and screen time but also to ensure children and families all stay physically and mentally healthy, building lifelong good habits around food, exercise, and well-being.

In the new year we will be inspected by our local authority to ensure we are meeting all the relevant targets within the HEY requirements and will hopefully be successful in receiving the award.



Nursery Kitchen

A wholesome, balanced diet is one of the most important parts of a healthy lifestyle. We actively teach children about nutrition, and our daily menus always include a minimum of five portions of fruit and veg. Our chef's Claire and Steph work closely to create our delicious menus, taking into account feedback from the biggest critic... the children.

Introducing new foods, tastes and textures is vital as children begin to explore their tastebuds and develop, they ability to chew and swallow safely. Both chef's do research and find recipes which will not only be suitable for the children nutrition wise, but they also look into different cuisines and how they can adapt them to give them that experience and learning opportunity.

Celebrating things like Chinese new year, Ramadan, Holi and exploring the countries cuisine is something we love to do. Educating children on other cultures and exploring all that has to offer is a wonderful way we ensure we remain diverse and inclusive and passing on that knowledge and awareness allows our children to have cultural capital.

We also hope you are all enjoying our drink and snacks in our parent areas. It is important to us that our families have access to a healthy snack and drink. We know sometimes the journey to and from nursery is long and many of our families have to travel a far distance so ensuring we can help prevent hunger during this time is important to us. We aim to support our families in any way we can, this is just one small way we wish to help.



Childrens Champions

Did you know we are a Children's Champion at the Sheffield Childrens Hospital? The children's Champion is an exclusive membership club for Sheffield Children's Hospital. As Children's Champions we donate £500 monthly towards enhancements to Sheffield Children's, funding specialist equipment, vital research and new facilities for our patients and families. We have helped to raise hundreds of thousands of pounds for Sheffield Children's. Starting as a small group of philanthropic individuals, the programme has grown into the exclusive membership club it is today.

Our Director Cherise Hatfield, Operational Manager Monet Hulme and Quality Assurance Manager Samijo Street had the pleasure of having a tour of the hospital recently to meet some of the team, take a look at the facilities the charity have helped to improve and also discuss the plans for the future.

Many of you may have visited the Sheffield Childrens Hospital and how far it has come since we were children. The new building which is the outpatients entrance is phenomenal. It almost doesn't feel like a hospital at all, light, airy, welcoming, games and area for play helping children to feel completely at ease as soon as you enter the building.

The facilities within the wards in this new building include hoists to help children in and out of their beds and baths in their own rooms. Facilities for family members to stay with their child comfortably, games rooms for different ages, teaching and learning for children that have to stay in hospital for long durations. Just incredible.

The lengths the hospital goes too to ensure that the children are given the best quality of care is just unreal. During our visit we got to meet some of the playworkers who specifically work with children in the Cancer and Leukaemia Ward department. In their play space they have incredible state of the interactive sensory light which transforms a room into anything, whether it be a snowy day, a warm cosy living room, a summers day and so many other things. To allow children to experience something they may not have had the opportunity to see or may not get to experience again. Supporting children through radiotherapy and the lengths they go to to ensure that the children are 100% supported and prepared for the treatment. Just wow.

The technology to share information is also state of the art throughout the hospital. Notes on each patient are updated immediately after each action has taken place, timetables are up-dated instantly and planned so specifically and strategically for each member of the team there to ensure each patient's information is recorded and everyone understands what is needed and expected. Without the charity, things like this would be possible.

"I am completely in awe of the playworkers especially, it is just incredible the strength, imagination and complete and utter dedication to those children and their families is just outstanding. I am so proud to be a small part of this charity. The environment, equipment and the teams are so very welcoming, kind, personal with the patients it just exceptional." said Samijo Street, Quality Assurance Manager.

We have 2 snowflakes on the building this Christmas due to becoming a Childrens Champion, and also the lump sum we donated after last year's Christmas fayre and raffle. We are so proud to have our name displayed on this building and will continue to work hard to raise more money moving forward in 2024.





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