**Starting Preschool**

We all know that starting playgroup for the first time can be a bit daunting not just for the child but for the parents too. So, to help with this a little we have compiled some information that we hope will make it easier.

* Prior to starting Preschool you will have been given some dates, A start date, a date for a home visit where your child’s key person visits you at home this really helps create the bonds and attachment to help them settle in preschool easier, and at least one date for a settling in/play visit where you come along with your child to stay and play to see the other staff and children who will be here and to help the transition into preschool. If you feel you need more stay and play visits or for your child to attend shorter sessions initially this is something you can discuss with your keyperson – settling in is unique for each child.
* Once a start date is set, we will email you a link to activate your child’s Tapestry online learning journal account – here both the staff and yourselves can post information, observations, news, photo etc of what your child has been doing in setting and out. We will also aim to post photos of their first day/week to help reassure you. Please take time to look at this regularly – the staff take great care in adding things to this about your child’s time in our setting and at the end of term you will receive a summary update. When they leave you can then download the journal as a keepsake of their time.
* There are few bits of paperwork that must be returned before starting these will be given to you on your home visit or before. These include Parental agreement [annually] Photo permission, completed registration form and administration fee, photocopy of birth certificate/passport and if you are eligible for Funded 2’s or the Extended 30 hours [renewed before every new term] your funding code to enable our administrator to claim your funding – without this you may be charged. Any important medical plans or information. [e.g., Asthma plans will the inhaler be kept on site?]
* For Safeguarding we ask that you email us photos of parents and those who you name will be regularly collecting your child – this just helps us alongside the password, to recognise you until we get to know your family – If you can appreciate, we have quite a few extended families to remember.
* We also ask for a portrait photo to be emailed in of your child to enable us to make their Lobby peg and self-registration name cards prior to starting.
* At Playgroup we also use a WhatsApp broadcast group to share important info quickly with you – by using a broadcast list we can send out group messages whilst keeping your mobile number private – but allows you to reply to only us – add our mobile number 07735389549 to your phone and send us a message so we can add you to the group – it means we can also see who hasn’t seen the message and contact again if urgent. The mobile number is only for WhatsApp and emergencies please continue to contact us via the main telephone number/email for all day-to-day communications.

**The first day!**

Having done all the above, home visit, play visit don’t worry if you or your child are anxious – most people are, you’ve made a plan with your keyperson about how to do this, we are all here to make it as smooth and enjoyable as possible. But if plans need to change, they can, if your child cries – give us a call in a short time to reassure yourself they are ok, if they struggle we **WILL** call you. To help- have you sent in a favourite toy or something from home to comfort them? Before starting it is good to begin using the language to help them understand that you are leaving them but that you also come back. For example when you go into the kitchen say “mummy’s leaving now but I’ll be back”, when you return say “mummy’s back now” This really helps them understand that you will come back when they are in preschool. Books are helpful too like the “Owl Babies” by Martin Waddell

**What do you need to bring:** Please ensure all items are NAMED to ensure they are returned if misplaced – we have a lot of items all the same and cannot be responsible to lost items this also includes toys/items brought in from home.

* Appropriate coat for the weather – Waterproof Mittens for cold weather – avoid gloves unless they can do them independently.
* Sun hat/woolly hat
* Wellies [preferably to be let at playgroup]
* Spare clothes in a **small bag** to be left on their peg – please remember the space is limited and children share pegs.
* Nappies, wipes, nappy bags – if being used.
* Any medication that is needed – **NAMED –** this should be discussed before starting and any relevant paperwork/asthma plans in place **BEFORE** they are left with us.
* Comforter – blanket/toy – if needed- not anything valuable or that will cause distress if you lose it or forget to take it home.
* Water bottle – to place on green trolley outside on arrival. This isn’t compulsory as we do have a water jug and cups available all day
* Lunchbox if they are booked in for lunch, place on red trolley outside on arrival. Please ensure lunch boxes are not too big as we only have so much space on the table – more info on lunches on the welcome sheet when you start.

**What do you need to wear:**

We are always looking to support independence in the children at all opportunities – they love being able to do things for themselves – it also means they don’t have to wait, dressing, undressing is a great way to do this but there are certain things you can do to help

* Footwear - Velcro shoes/trainers – no shoes laces or buckles please unless they can do these independently – ensure your child’s shoes it properly anything too big will mean they trip over and is not safe for climbing, too small will result in sore feet. Children want to run around, climb, jump etc – ensure their footwear is suitable for this – not thick soled ‘on trend’ trainers – but practical.
* Clothing should be loose, layers are best so we can take off if hot, put on if cold. No all in ones or dungarees, t-shirts, joggers, leggings are best. With a jumper/ hoody to wear as needed. If your child is toilet training or using the toilet independently ensure clothing allows them to get them off quickly – they will leave it until the last minute, then be in a hurry as the games were so distracting. Tights and skirts/dresses can also be tricky to manage at first.
* Waterproofs [separate jacket/trousers] can be brought in for wet weather or water play. There will be LOTS of water play so if you would rather not keep taking wet clothes home this is a good idea.
* We do have uniform available to purchase please ask. Polo shirts and Sweaters. We also collect back good condition old uniform from children who leave and offer it for re-sale at a discounted price usually at the beginning of the year but do ask we may have some available. [doing our bit for recycling]
* Lastly please do not send your child in with their new dress or shoes, their favourite Elsa or Spider man dressing up costume on because they will get paint on it, they may scuff their shoes on the trikes. They are here to play, explore have fun.

**Preschool Routine:**

* Please wait outside to be let in, pop your water bottle and lunch bag on the trolleys [if you have brought them]
* Your key person will meet you at the door on the first day
* You can hand over any existing injuries forms or if you need a quick word, please wait till all the children waiting are in – or if non urgent drop us email. Drop off and pick up times can be busy.
* Your child will put their coat and things on their peg and go to self-registration, they will then begin to play [Freeplay inside].
* We then open the doors to access inside and outside free play.
* Rolling snack around 9.45am, with an adult. New children are supported with routine until they become familiar, those who choose not to have snack are encouraged and reminded to have a drink throughout the day. [If your child’s water bottle is full still, please bear in mind we use cups at snack time and we refill throughout the day when empty]
* 11.30 home time for some/ 12 noon-12.30 lunchtime
* 12.30 afternoon session begins [some children go home now]
* 3pm all children go home – please not times vary according to what you are booked in for so these may be different for you.

**FAQ’s**

**What are your Opening times?**

Term time Monday to Friday 9-3pm, Am 8.30-11.30/Lunch 11.30-12.30/Pm 12.30-3pm

Sessions can be a combination of these hours please discuss for availability and options.

**Howe old does my child need to be to attend?**

We take children from 2years old

**How many sessions do children normally attend?**

We expect children to attend a minimum of 2 sessions for them to establish a routine that they are settled with – this can be increased subject to preference and availability. Please do not assume that your child will automatically attend for 15 hours [30 if eligible] the term after their 3rd birthday once Gov funding begins – sessions need to be booked a maximum of a term in advance or asap – if you think you would like to increase sessions in the future please discuss with us asap to avoid disappointment.

**Do you have a waiting list?**

No – our admissions are by date of birth order, upon receipt of a completed registration form and administration fee – once these are completed you will be given a confirmation of sessions to secure your place. If we are limited on space, we will allocate places according to our admissions policy.

**What is your adult:child ratios?**

We operate according to the statutory requirements of 3–4 year-olds 1:8, 2 year olds 1:4. With the aim to always have above the minimum requirements.

We hope that you find this information useful, if you have any further questions please ask or if you have anything that may be useful to know added to this please let us know.

We hope you have a great first day and Welcome to Great Gransden Preschool Playgroup

