

## **Little Pickles Nursery**

We are an established and well-respected family run nursery set in a quiet location in Halstead, Essex. Our business has been successfully running for over 40 years and we have always been based in the local area. We moved here to our current location in July 2015, after seven years at our previous premises at Whitehouse Business Park in White Ash Green.

Our building, which many years ago used to be a paper mill, has now been converted into a purpose built, interlinking, high spec nursery which has a wonderful 'free flow' garden.

We cater for children between the ages of 0-5 years and our nursery is divided into four rooms to ensure the highest quality care for each specific age range. We are an all year nursery with a fantastic team of staff who have a wealth of experience and knowledge between them.

All staff and students are checked using the Disclosure and barring service (DBS) formally known as a CRB to ensure that they are suitable to work with children.

We have a range of different sessions that you can choose from, however, a minimum of seven hours per week is required. This is because we have found from past experience that anything less than 7 hours can be quite unsettling for the children, meaning their transition into nursery may not be quite as efficient or as smooth and calming as we'd like it to be for them. Their level of well-being, security and happiness is of paramount importance to us, hence why this is a mandatory requirement.

If parents/carers would like to deduct their child's set sessions/days/hours, we require four weeks written notice. We are open Monday – Friday 7:45am-6:00pm, closing on National Bank Holidays and the week between Christmas and New Year. Please note that we are open all year round so **we do not offer term time only care.**

### **The Curiosity Approach**

This modern day approach to Early Years is something that we live and breathe by here at Little Pickles. It's embedded in our ethos and it is imperative that our practitioners demonstrate excellent understanding, passion, love and experience in Early Childhood.

Gone are the brightly coloured plastic toys and instead our nursery is filled with wonderful authentic resources, recycled materials and loose parts to encourage children to explore, handle and investigate which in turn creates awe, curiosity and wonder. On joining the nursery parents will receive further information on what this amazing approach entails and how we implement it at nursery.

### **Baby Pickles (0 - 14/16 months)**

This calming room is for our baby pickles. It caters for up to 6 babies with two members of staff. Our aim is to create a warm, cosy, nurturing environment, which very much resembles home life. We achieve this by basing your baby's routine on the routine they have at home as much as possible.

Each baby has their own special member of staff caring for them who we call their key person and whom they will form a close bond with so that they and their parents/carers feel settled and secure.

We have a tranquil sleep room containing cots and low-level sleep pods, where our babies can have their rest when needed in a peaceful environment that is closely monitored by staff using the glass door panel. However, the room also doubles up as an extra play space when all of the babies are awake.

We have plenty of stimulating resources, equipment and materials for our babies to play with, as this encourages them to use their senses and to move, explore and develop their learning across all areas. We also have a cosy area and a soothing rocking chair for the all-important cuddles!

Our babies have their very own sensory garden to explore. They can choose activities such as sand/water play, access the soft climbing equipment or simply sit with a practitioner on the grass for a quiet story.

Fresh milk feeds are prepared daily by our experienced practitioners and our cook in the main kitchen cooks nutritious food from scratch for all of the children. At the end of the day each baby is given their own daily report sheet which tells our parents what their baby has eaten, when and how long they have slept, when they have been changed and what fun things they have been getting up to!

For those children using the 9 month/2 year grant funding, we ask parents to either pay a small fee for our food, nappies, wipes, creams and nappy bags, or alternatively, provide their own.

### **Teenie Pickles (14/16 months - 2 years)**

This lovely room is for our little toddlers. It caters for up to 9 children with up to 3 members of staff. The children now require a wider range of activities and resources to progress their fine and gross motor skills, along with developing their communication. The children begin to experiment with all sorts of fun and exciting materials such as paint, glue, water and sand play, along with lots of other wonderful messy play tuff tray activities. They also explore puzzles, small world resources and enjoy a lot of story time and singing.

At this stage of their development, we introduce our routine coming slightly away from your agenda at home. However, we of course continue to meet the individual needs of each child.

Further independence is encouraged at this stage by promoting self-feeding, sitting on small chairs at mealtimes and managing their own hand washing.

Each of our toddlers has their own blanket and pillow, which is washed frequently, to enable them to have a nap on our low level sleep mats, along with any comforters they may have from home.

### **Tiny Pickles (2-3 years)**

This bright and cheery room caters for up to sixteen children with up to four members of staff. Children moving up to this room will be introduced gently through trial visits with their key person, gradually building up to a permanent move. This process applies to all children moving into the next room.

The routine is very similar to Teenie Pickles with plenty of free play, craft, access to the garden and a wide choice of fun activities throughout their day to fully support their learning and development. Our practitioners carefully observe their key children to ensure all activities cater for each unique child's interests, needs, strengths and weaknesses.

Again, children in Tiny Pickles have access to our free flow garden where they can enjoy sand/water play, ball games, the climbing frame, mud kitchen and den building!

Each child in this room has their own named peg to hang up their coat and bag. Experiences that promote independence and autonomy come into play at this stage, and the staff have a wealth of experience when it comes to toilet training too!

### **The Pre-Reception Class (3-5 years)**

This is what the children call our 'big room' and is the last stop of their nursery journey before school! It caters for up to twenty-four children with up to three members of staff.

This lovely large room includes a quiet cosy snug for the children to snuggle up with a book, as well as a well-equipped authentic role-play area. It is of course slightly more structured which prepares the children for school, introducing early phonics, writing and maths skills. Practical skills such as serving their own lunch, scraping their plates, changing into their PE kit and packing their bag are also helpful ways to ensure their transition into school is as smooth as possible. More challenging invitations to play are

incorporated into the day, but are all still very much based on the children's interests. We also encourage and support a higher level of independence with regards to the children's self-care (e.g. dressing, toileting etc.).

We like to extend the children's experiences by partaking in little trips to the Library, local schools and shops. They also may pop to the Bakers to buy some bread or maybe go for a walk to feed the ducks or have a play at the parks. Prior to Covid we made fortnightly visits to Colne Valley Care Home, which both the children and residents loved. We took part in activities such as pottery, 'sit fit' and 'knit and natter'! We very much look forward to getting back there once they're ready to open their doors to us again.

### **Allocation of Nursery Places**

Places are allocated on a first come first serve basis. Once parents have been informed of the spaces available, the space becomes theirs once we have received the registration form and the registration fee. Where it is not possible to offer the place requested, your details will be placed on a waiting list. If and when any vacancies become available, these too will be offered on a first come first serve basis.

Please note that we will not be able to hold a full time place for those parents coming out of maternity leave and who may not be sure of their new working days. Spaces should only be secured once parents have received absolute confirmation of their working days and agreed it with their employer.

### **Settling into Nursery**

Approximately 4-6 weeks prior to your child's first day, we will call you to book in your first introductory settling-in session with us. This is a time in which you can watch your child's key person interact with your child and start to create a bond. The first session usually lasts an hour and one parent is required to stay with their child for the entirety. We ask for one parent only to attend due to our other children often finding new faces slightly overwhelming, which can unsettle them. Your child's key person will then liaise with you and arrange the next set of settling in sessions with you. Every child is unique and some may settle into nursery quicker than others. It is therefore imperative that the amount of sessions are negotiated on an individual basis. Please be assured that these trials are free of charge.

### **Parent Partnerships**

The closer we work together, the more rewarding the experience is for you, your child and us. It is therefore a key principle to develop a strong relationship between our staff and parents through effective communication.

Your child's progress within the seven areas of learning and development in the Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum are monitored using an online learning journal app called 'Tapestry'. This enables parents to view and comment on their child's observations and pictures/videos capturing their special moments. It also gives parents the opportunity to contribute their own stories of their child's activities at home.

We also offer parent evenings at the end of every term where parents have the opportunity to discuss their child's development in further detail with their child's key person, as well as any concerns that they may have.

### **Funding Entitlement**

From April 2024, two-year-old children of eligible working parents can receive funded entitlement hours the term after they turn two. This is for 15 hours per week for 38 weeks of the year. However, as we are a full day care nursery, we 'stretch' the grant funding, giving parents 11 hours per week for 50 weeks of the year.

From September 2024, nine-month-old children of eligible working parents can receive funded entitlement hours the term after they turn 9 months old. Again parents will receive 11 hours per week for 50 weeks of the year.

All three and four year olds can receive funded entitlement hours from the term after they turn three until they go to school. This is called the universal funded entitlement. Again children will receive 11 hours per week for 50 weeks of the year. Three and four year olds of eligible working parents can receive the extended funded entitlement, which is another 15 hours in addition to the universal 15 funded hours. We however do not currently offer the extended hours but parents are welcome to split the 30 hours between us and another childcare provider that do offer the extended hours. I.e. 11 hours per week with us for 50 weeks of the year and the remaining 15 hours per week for 38 weeks of the year at another setting.

You will be able to check your eligibility online at <http://www.gov.uk/check-eligible-free-childcare-if-youre-working>.

Here you can complete an online application. Before you sign up for the entitlement, you need to look at all of the options to make sure you choose the best package for you. It is possible that the childcare element of Working Tax Credit could be affected as you would likely be paying for less childcare.

You will then be required to renew your eligibility code with Childcare choices every 3 months. Your renewal date will be given to you when your application is approved. Please keep a note of this date and ensure you renew to continue claiming the funded hours.

If you are unsure please go to [www.childcarechoices.gov.uk](http://www.childcarechoices.gov.uk) where you will find all of the information you need.

## **Tax Free Childcare**

Working parents of children under the age of 12 may be entitled to tax free childcare. Under the scheme parents receive a government top up of £2 for every £8 they pay into their tax free childcare account.

To find out if you're eligible and for more information, please visit [www.gov.uk/apply-for-tax-free-childcare](http://www.gov.uk/apply-for-tax-free-childcare)

## **Fees**

There are a variety of ways of paying your fees. You can either pay by vouchers, direct debit, bacs or cash. You will receive your invoice between the 20<sup>th</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup> of each month via email, and payments must be made by the 1<sup>st</sup> of the following month.

A termly payment (four monthly) option is also available with a 10% discount, as well as a 15% discount to those that choose to pay for the year upfront. Some parents prefer to pay the same set amount each month which is worked out by dividing the whole year fees amount by 12 months.

## **Our Team**

We have a fantastic team of seventeen staff who have been carefully chosen for their experience, knowledge and dedication caring for children. We aim to provide the very best in childcare by creating an environment that is welcoming, safe, warm, nurturing and stimulating.

We hold a wide range of qualifications including Early Years Teacher Status, Paediatric First aid, Special Educational Needs, Health and Safety, Safeguarding and much more. Our staff attend various courses throughout the year to continuously develop their skills and broaden their knowledge.

## **Our Uniform**

Our nursery uniform colours have always been yellow and royal blue, which are the colours of our staff fleeces. We also offer a set of uniform to the children. This is of course not compulsory, but we do love seeing our little ones wearing them proudly! It also saves your nice clothes too! This uniform includes a t-shirt, polo shirt, jumper and fleece. Should you wish to order a whole set or individual items please see the price list below and contact us with your order.

**T-shirt - £5.00**  
**Polo shirt - £8.00**  
**Jumper - £11.50**  
**Fleece - £13.50**  
**Whole set - £35.00**

### **Baby Sitting**

Many of our staff are happy to babysit for our parent's children, which we find works very well for our families as trusting bonds are formed at nursery, especially with the child's key person. However, please note that this is a separate agreement between the member of staff and the parents, and we as the nursery cannot take any responsibility for any incidents that may occur.

### **Children's Birthday Parties**

We offer this free service to parents of children who would like their child to celebrate their birthday with their nursery friends. Parents will need to please provide prizes for games that we play, a pass the parcel (3-5 years) and either a shop bought cake or from a licensed baker. The younger children (under 2's) prefer dancing, bubble popping and sensory experiences as their way of celebrating. Party bags are non-compulsory.

### **Viewing the Nursery**

If you would like to come and view the nursery in action, please phone or email us and we will be more than happy to make an appointment with you. Our appointments are booked at 10am Mon-Fri. Your little ones are welcome to come along too! Many thanks for showing an interest in us and we hope to hear from you soon.

Best wishes,

Julie & Clare  
(Management team)