

# FAMILY NEWS



Dear Parents and Carers,

The start of the year has flown by, and we are now embracing the beauty of spring. The children have enjoyed participating in wonderful celebrations, including Chinese New Year and Pancake Day, and we look forward to even more exciting events in the coming months.

I want to warmly welcome our new Apprentice, Holly, our Maternity Cover Chef, Marius, and all the new children who have recently joined us. Seeing them settling in so well has been fantastic, and we are here to support our new parents as their little ones adjust to nursery life. Our open days have been a fantastic way to showcase our nursery and invite the local community to participate in fun activities for their children. We would love to see you at our next one on Saturday, 22nd March 2025. Feel free to come along.

As a gentle reminder, mobile phones are prohibited when dropping off or collecting children. Please be considerate when parking and mindful of other cars and space. To avoid disruption, we ask that parents wait for handover with practitioners outside the classrooms. Additionally, please be aware of our scheduled mealtimes and note that external food is not allowed due to allergies among the children. Finally, thank you to all our existing parents for your partnership and support, we genuinely appreciate it.

Best regards,  
Daniella and the Crawley Team

## Dates for your diary

### Holidays and Closures:

- **Friday 18th April** – Good Friday (Nursery Closed)
- **Monday 21st April** – Easter Monday (Nursery Closed)
- **Monday 5th May** – Early May Bank Holiday (Nursery Closed)
- **Monday 26th May** – Late May Bank Holiday (Nursery Closed)

### Other:

- **Friday 21st March** – Red Nose Day
- **Saturday 22nd March** – Spring Spectacular Open Day

**Don't forget to follow our Social Media:**





### The Baby Snug

During Children's Mental Health Week, the babies have been focused on further developing their independence through sensory explorative play opportunities. These activities allowed them to take control of their play experiences, emphasising the process of the activity rather than the final product. One of the key activities involved the children independently experimenting with ingredients to make their own play dough, using pipettes to squeeze in water, oil, and coloured paint, helping to develop their fine motor skills.

In addition, the babies engaged in a sensory-stimulating activity involving gloop and insects. This activity was designed not only to encourage exploration of different textures but also to support emotion regulation during Children's Mental Health Week. The activities aimed to boost confidence, helping the babies feel more comfortable exploring and expressing themselves through play.

### Continue at home

Create your own play dough at home by mixing flour, water, salt, and a little oil. You can add food colouring or glitter for extra fun!

Let your child take the lead, using tools like spoons, cookie cutters, or even pipettes to experiment with different textures and shapes. This will help develop their fine motor skills and creativity.

### The Toddler Den

The toddlers have been busy exploring their interests in cooking and construction. They have enjoyed spending time in our role-play kitchen, which has created a language-rich environment that encourages imaginative play. Through these activities, the children have expanded their vocabulary and developed their fine motor skills and concentration as they engaged in tasks like cutting Weetabix.

Building on their growing interest in construction, the toddlers have had fun using screwdrivers to fix wooden cars. Watching them explore and enhance their abilities through these activities has been wonderful.

Additionally, the children participated in Pancake Day, using ingredients to mix and make their own pancakes, further developing their fine motor skills and understanding of processes. We also celebrated World Book Day on March 6th, exploring and getting in touch with our emotions through stories, looking at maps with magnifying glasses, and using recipe books to facilitate learning through role play. These activities have supported their learning and sparked creativity and engagement with the world around them.

### Continue at home

Create a small construction zone with building blocks or wooden toys at home. Add tools like plastic screwdrivers or even safe real tools (under supervision) for your child to practice "fixing" or building their own creations.

### The Pre-School Study

The Preschool children have been sparking their curiosity by using magnifying glasses to explore natural resources and different loose parts. They have also been looking at real-life magazines and observing wildlife, plants, birds, and more to deepen their understanding of the world around them. This exploration has been an excellent opportunity for them to connect with nature and develop their knowledge.

In addition, the children have been busy celebrating Valentine's Day, engaging in various activities, including rice play and arts and crafts, to create unique gifts for their loved ones. These activities have provided an excellent way for them to express their creativity and feelings through play.

With the influx of new preschoolers joining us, we have also focused on colour and number recognition. The children have been challenged to match objects to the correct colours while counting them out, supporting their numeracy and early learning skills. Seeing their growth and enthusiasm as they engage in these activities has been exciting!

### Continue at home

Go for a nature walk and take a magnifying glass to explore the world. Let your child examine leaves, flowers, rocks, or insects. Talk about what they see, encouraging them to describe textures, colours, and patterns. You can also collect interesting natural objects and create a nature discovery box at home where your child can explore these items further.

## Recipe of the Month

### VEGGIE PARMIGIANA

#### INGREDIENTS:

- Aubergines, cut into 1cm thick rings
- 1 tbsp garlic infused olive oil (you can make your own by adding 2 cloves of garlic to olive oil)
- 3 large onions, finely chopped
- 3 large carrots, diced
- 3 peppers (any colour), diced
- 2 large courgettes, sliced
- 2 tspn dried oregano
- 2x 400g tinned chopped tomatoes (no added sugar or salt)
- 50g pasteurised Italian style cheese, finely grated
- 125g mozzarella, thinly sliced



#### INSTRUCTIONS

1. Set the grill to high, and grill the aubergine slices until browned on each side, and set aside.
2. Preheat the oven to 180C/350F/Gas mark 4.
3. Heat the oil in a pan and add the onions. Stir until softened.
4. Add the carrots, peppers, and courgette, and stir frequently.
5. Mix in the tinned tomatoes and oregano, and simmer for 10 minutes.
6. Layer the sauce and aubergines in an oven proof dish, finishing with the sauce.
7. Top with Italian style cheese and sliced mozzarella.
8. Bake for 35 minutes until golden.

## Recent Training

We would like to take a moment to celebrate two of our amazing team members at Little Explorers Crawley for their recent achievements:

Holly has successfully completed her Safeguarding Training, and Emily has completed her Paediatric First Aid Training.

## Colleague Spotlight

We want to take a moment to appreciate all the incredible staff at Little Explorers Crawley for their dedication, hard work, and unwavering commitment to the children. Each team member goes above and beyond to create a nurturing, stimulating, and supportive environment where every child feels valued, safe, and inspired.

Everyone plays a vital role in making Little Explorers such a special place, from the passionate educators to the friendly support staff. Their creativity, enthusiasm, and love for what they do shine through in everything they put into their work. They constantly support and encourage the children's growth, helping them learn and explore in fun and engaging ways.

We are truly grateful for the dedication and care shown every day, and we couldn't be prouder of the fantastic team we have at Little Explorers Crawley. Thank you for everything you do – your impact on the children is invaluable!

# EXCITING CHARITY PARTNERSHIP ANNOUNCEMENT

At iStep Learning, we believe in nurturing young minds while also fostering kindness, empathy, and a strong sense of community. That's why we're thrilled to introduce iStep into the Community - our new initiative dedicated to giving back to local causes.

Each of our nurseries has chosen a charity close to their hearts. At Crawley Day Nursery & Preschool, we are committed to fostering a supportive community and teaching our children the importance of empathy and generosity. We recognise that many families face challenging circumstances that make providing essential items for their children difficult. This is why we have chosen to support Ten Little Toes Baby Bank, a local charity dedicated to offering crucial support to families in crisis or facing hardship. Their mission aligns with our values of compassion, community support, and ensuring that every child has access to the necessities for a healthy and happy start in life.

Through two fundraising events - one in May and one in July - children, families, and staff will come together to make a meaningful impact. Keep an eye out for more details soon! Together, we can create a ripple effect of kindness!

We will soon be releasing our full iStep into the Community pack, which will showcase all the charities our nurseries have chosen to support.

You can find out more about the incredible work that Ten Little Toes Baby Bank do [here](#)

