The Big Top Pre-School (Buckingham Park)

Prospectus

Welcome to the Big Top Pre-School, Buckingham Park.

**Background**

The Big Top group of childcare provisions consists of 3 different settings. We first opened our pre-school in Bedgrove in 2002, this was followed by Buckingham Park in 2012 and our day nursery based in Waddesdon opened in 2013.

All 3 settings aim to provide a happy and secure environment in which children can learn, play and develop. All our staff are DBS checked and we ensure we meet the qualification requirements of staff set out within the Ofsted Statutory Guidance. We are an inclusive setting and welcome all children from the age of 2 years in our Buckingham Park and Bedgrove pre-schools and from the age of 3 months in our Waddesdon nursery.

**Aims**

* To work closely with parents/carers in partnership to meet the needs of each child and support you with any difficulties that might arise
* To provide high quality care and education for all children in our pre-school
* To work in partnership with parents to help children to learn through play and develop fully mentally, physically and socially
* To add to the life and well being of our local community
* To offer young children the opportunity to make friends and become independent, ready for their big step into school

To do this we will:

* Provide a safe and stimulating environment and a happy, friendly and caring atmosphere
* A specially tailored curriculum leading to approved learning outcomes
* Individual care and attention made possible by a high ratio of adults to children
* Give your child the chance to join with other children and adults to live, play, work and learn together
* Opportunities for you and your family to be directly involved in the education of your child and the activities of the group
* The support of an individual assigned key person

**Opening hours:**

The pre-school is open Monday to Friday, term time only. We usually open and close in line with the Buckinghamshire schools, but this may differ at the end or start of the term. We open during the following hours:

Monday 09:15 – 12:15

Tuesday – Thursday 09:15 – 12:15 or 09:15 – 2:15

Friday 09:15 – 12:15

If attending for the long sessions on a Tuesday – Thursday, you will need to provide a lunch box for your child.

At our Buckingham Park setting, we are able to offer the option of a breakfast club. This enables you to drop your child off at 8:30. This can be booked as a regular session or as an ‘as and when required’ session. The cost is £3.00, payable on arrival. Your child will be offered cereal or toast for their breakfast.

We provide care for children between the ages of 2 and 4 years.

**Helping your child to settle in**

We would like to welcome you and your child to Big Top Pre-School. Should you choose to join us, we will look forward to working in partnership with you to make you and your child’s time with us a happy and successful one.

Children settle into pre-school in lots of different ways. Some children will confidently move into school as soon as they come in, for instance if they have attended toddler sessions or have and older sibling in the school. Other children may be nervous and anxious about leaving their parent. Most children will be somewhere in between. We do require our children to attend a minimum of 2 session per week. We find that children who attend less will take several more sessions to settle as the time between each is too long. We want to try and settle our children as quickly as possible so that they can enjoy and learn during their time with us.

Leaving children can be quite hard for parents, especially if it is for the first time. Please be reassured and try not to worry if your child experiences difficulties – it is a very normal part of a child’s development to be anxious, nervous or even angry about starting pre-school. Also, children under three years of age often need a little more time for each of the stages. We also recognise that many parents will find this a difficult and sometimes upsetting process. We hope that we can use our experience to support you and your child in whatever way suits you to make it more or less as tear free as possible.

**Familiarisation – visit 1**

This stage is the first step towards helping children settle in. The aim of this stage is to help your child feel familiar with their environment. Children visit the setting during a session and stay for about and hour and a half. Parents are shown around and encouraged to play with their child. Do not expect your child to want to leave your or play with others. They will when they feel comfortable. The key worker will play alongside the child and their parent. You will also be required to complete the paperwork that has permission forms and the vital information we need prior to your child joining us.

**Forming and attachment – visit 2**

As well as feeling familiar with a new place, young children also need to become familiar with the people who work in the setting. This stage encourages the child to feel comfortable with their key worker.

* When the child is playing happily next to the parent and the key worker, the parent will be encouraged to sit back and become less involved in the play. The key worker will then talk/play and make friends with the child.
* Parents will be encouraged to wander across to the other side of the room just for a few minutes and then return to their child. Repeat this several times until the child is no longer looking around for the parent.
* When the child is happily playing with the key worker, encourage the parent to tell the child they are just popping to the toilet or other place out of sight and then return after 2 -3 minutes. Lengthen to 5 minutes, repeat until the child is perfectly happy.

If your child is joining us at the start of the Autumn term in September, you will be invited to join us for a Stay and Play session. This is open to all new starters and is an opportunity to refresh the child’s memory after a long summer break when they may have visited us for the first time.

**Starting Pre-School**

First complete and return the waiting list registration of interest form. We will contact you when a place becomes available for your child to start with us to confirm you would still like a place and the sessions you would like. We will also discuss your start date and settling in sessions.

We offer the familiarization visit prior to the start date. The visit will enable you to meet the staff and ask any questions. You will also be able to experience some of the daily routine; free play, adult led focused activity, outdoor play, snack time, packing away and maybe story time. During this time, you will need to complete the paperwork needed prior to starting. You will also need to pay your administration fee at this point. This covers the cost of joining paperwork and the settling in visits.

A child who is tense or unhappy will not be able to play or learn properly so it is important for parents and pre-school staff to work together to help the child to feel confident and secure in the group. This takes longer for some children and parents should not feel worried if their child takes a while to settle. We do require that a parent or carer stay with the child on the settling in visits as this helps the child to integrate more quickly and gives you the opportunity to ask any questions and become familiar with the routines.

**The curriculum**

Children start to learn about the world around them from the moment they are born. The care and education offered by Big Top helps children to continue to do this by providing all the children with interesting activities that are right for their age and stage of development.

Big Top Pre-School provides a curriculum for the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). This guidance divides children’s learning and development into seven areas of learning, which are split into two parts:

* The three prime areas – which are for all children and will always be the main focus of our planning and activities for children under three years of age.
* The four specific areas – which are mostly used for the other children (over threes) but are also relevant for younger children.

For each area there are early learning goals, which set out what the children are expected to know and be able to do by the end of their reception year. For each early learning goal, there are stepping stones, which describe the stages through which children are likely to pass as the move to achieve the goals. Big Top uses these early learning goals and their stepping stones to help all our children move towards achievement of the early learning goals.

By the time your child leaves to enter compulsory education we hope to have attend the following goals in each area of the curriculum.

**These are the three prime areas:**

**Personal, social and emotional development**

Children are confident, show appropriate self-respect and are able to form good relationships with adults and children. They work as part of the group and independently and are able to concentrate and persevere in their learning and to seek help where needed. They are eager to explore new learning and show ability to initiate new ideas and to solve simple practical problems. They demonstrate independence in selecting an activity or resources and in dressing and personal hygiene. Children are sensitive to the needs and feelings of others. They take turns and share fairly. They express their feelings and behave in appropriate ways, developing and understanding of what is right, what is wrong and why. They treat living things, property and their environment with care and concern. They have developing respect for their own cultures and beliefs and those of other people.

**Physical Development**

Children move confidently and imaginatively with increasing control and co-ordination and an awareness of space and others. They use a range of small and large equipment and balancing and climbing equipment with increasing skill. They handle appropriate tools, objects, construction and malleable materials safely and with increasing control. They are made aware of healthy living. They recognise changes that happen to their bodies when they are active. They are able to manage their own self-care independently.

**Communication and Language**

In small groups children listen attentively and talk about their experiences. They pay attention and are able to communicate with other children and adults. They use a growing vocabulary with increasing fluency. They listen and respond to stories, songs, nursery rhymes and poems. Children enjoy books from our well stocked book corner and handle them carefully.

**These are the four specific areas:**

**Literacy**

Children enjoy books from our well stocked book corner and handle them carefully. They know that words and pictures carry meaning and that, in English, print is read from left to right and from top to bottom. They begin to associate sounds with syllables and with words and letters. They recognise their own names and familiar words. They recognise letters of the alphabet by shape and sound. They are able to use a pencil and hold it effectively to form recognisable letters, most of which are correctly formed. They can write their own name with appropriate upper and lower case letters.

**Mathematics**

Children use mathematical language such as circle, in front of, bigger than and more to describe shape, position, size and quantity. They use language such as ‘greater’ or ‘smaller’, ‘heavier’ or ‘lighter’. They recognise and recreate patterns. They are familiar with number rhymes, songs, stories, counting games and activities. They compare, sort, match, order, sequence and count using everyday objects. They recognise and use numbers to 10 and are familiar with larger numbers from their everyday lives. They begin to use their developing mathematical understanding to solve practical problems. They understand the passing of time.

**Understanding the world**

Children talk about where they live, their environment, their families and past and present events in their own lives. They explore and recognise features of living things and look closely at similarities, differences, patterns and change. They talk about their observations. They explore and select materials and equipment and use skills such as cutting, joining, folding and building for a variety of purposes. They find out about and identify the uses of everyday technology and use information technology and programmable toys to support their learning. They begin to learn about their own cultures and beliefs and those of other people. They learn to use some ICT equipment confidently.

**Art and design**

Children explore sound and colour, texture, shape, form and space in two and three dimensions. They respond in a variety of ways to what they see, hear, smell, touch and feel. Through art, music, dance, stories and imaginative play they show and increasing ability to use their imagination, to listen and to observe. They use a widening range of materials, suitable tools, instruments and other resources to express ideas and to communicate their feelings.

Children’s progress will be at different rates and individual achievements will vary. However, all children will be encouraged to make maximum progress towards these early learning goals.

**The session**

We organise our sessions so that the children can choose from -and work at – a range of activities and, in doing so, build up their ability to select and work through a task to completion.

The children are also helped and encouraged to take part in adult – led, small and large group activities which introduce them to new experiences and help them to gain new skills, as well as helping them to learn to work with others. Outdoor activities contribute to children’s health, their physical development and their knowledge of the world around them. We encourage children to gain the skills that help them to be independent and look after themselves. These include taking themselves to the toilet and taking off and putting on outdoor clothes. Clothing that is easy for them to manage will help them to do this.

**Activities**

A typical morning will provide the children with a free choice of a range of activities and play materials, all designed to encourage them to become independent, communicate, develop creativity, explore the world around them, express feelings, relate to others, understand concepts and to physically use both large and small muscles in order to improve both gross and fine manipulative skills.

Some of the activities and materials available include: construction toys, ‘home corner’, dressing up, creative materials, junk modelling, puzzles, games, educational toys, paint, play dough, scissors, water, sand play, book corner, trains, cars and garages, and outside equipment such as bikes, balls, hoops, bean bags and our large climbing frame.

These activities are provided in ways that:

* Help each child to feel that he/she is a valued member of the group;
* Ensure the safety of each child;
* Help children to gain from the social experience of being part of a group;
* Provide children with opportunities to learn and help them to value learning.

In addition, the children are grouped according to age and stage of development for group stories, songs and dancing. The children are asked questions so that they can explore the topics and a discussion takes place. Themes are selected to further develop children’s learning and experiences. These may include seasonal changes, mini beasts where the children experience and watch the life cycle of a butterfly, summer holidays, people who help us, and space.

Children are also taken out for regular nature walks where they can look and discuss what is in the environment around them. Parental consent will be obtained allowing this.

**What to wear**

Due to the nature of the activities taking place throughout the morning, your child may get messy, so please dress him/her in easily washable clothes which allow easy movement. We provide protective clothing for the children when they play with messy activities, but sometimes they still get messy. Please choose clothes with simple fastenings to make using the toilet easy and as independent as possible. Please label all clothing clearly with your child’s name. At each session, please bring in a bag, again clearly named, containing a spare pair of clothes for your child, nappies, wipes and creams if needed.

**How parents take part in pre-school**

Big Top recognizes parents as the first and most important educators of their children. All our staff see themselves as co-workers with you in providing a high quality of care and education for your child. There are many ways in which parents can take part in making the pre-school a welcoming and stimulating place for children and parents;

* Exchanging knowledge about their child’s needs, activities, interests and progress with the staff;
* Helping at sessions
* Sharing their own special interests with the children
* Taking part in events and informal discussions about the activities and curriculum;
* Joining in the community activities in which the pre-school takes part;
* Building friendships with other parents in the pre-school
* Parents who have a particular interest or skill they feel they can share with the children are encouraged to do so by taking part in the sessions

**Staff**

The pre-school staff members have a wealth of experience, which is backed by a variety of qualifications in the childcare field, which include NNEB, NVQ 2 and 3 qualifications. Each member of staff has also undergone an Enhanced DBS check.

Staff hold First Aid and Food Hygiene certificates. All staff are given the opportunity to undertake appropriate training to up-date their skills and underpin their knowledge and understanding the needs of pre-school children.

We maintain the ratio of adults to children as follows:

Under 3’s 1:4

3 and 4 year olds 1:8

We often also have volunteer parent helpers to compliment these ratios. We are open for 38 weeks per year and are closed during school holidays. We are open for 5 days per week.

**Key workers**

Our key worker system gives each member of staff particular responsibility for a group of children. Each child in the group has one adult to relate to, which can make settling into the group much easier. In addition, the key worker is in a position to tailor the group’s curriculum to the unique needs of the individual child. The key worker maintains links with the child’s home setting, working with the parents through shared record keeping to ensure that all children are supported in reaching their full potential. Within all our pre-school and nursery settings, we use a system called EYLog to keep a digital Learning Journey for your child. Your child’s key worker will carry out both planned and spontaneous observations on your child and will record their progress within the EYFS. The system allows you as the parent to also contribute to these Learning Journeys by either carrying out and installing your own observation or commenting on an observation from your child’s key worker. The key worker will also use the information gained through observations to plan for your child’s next step within the EYFS they will be working on during their time in pre-school.

**Medical Issues**

Please keep your child at home if he/she is poorly and not well enough to be with us. Please phone the pre-school to let us know that your child will be absent and the reason for this. If they have an infectious illness, it is important for us to be able to inform other parents within the setting so that they can watch out for symptoms in their own child. If your child has either sickness or diarrhoea, the must not attend pre-school for 48 hours following the last bout of illness. If your child becomes ill whilst they are at pre-school, we will of course contact you and ask that you come to collect them. Knocks and bumps are quite common in a childcare setting as children run around, negotiating equipment and their peers, climbing and balancing on pieces of equipment or often, just tripping over their own feet! We always have a trained paediatric first aider on site to administer first aid should your child need it. We will inform you at the end of the session if your child has had a minor accident, bump or graze at pre-school. You will always be contacted immediately if your child suffers anything more than a trivial injury, or if we have any concerns about his/her health. As part of our guidance from Ofsted and as part of our Safeguarding Policy, you will also be required to inform the pre-school if your child has had an accident at home when arriving for your session. You will be asked to complete and Accident At Home form.

**Confidentiality**

All verbal information and written documents concerning the children shall remain confidential between their parents/carers and the staff. All written records shall be kept in a locked cabinet with access allowed only to permanent staff. Individual children’s records are available for parents to see on request. Any concerns regarding the children, will be discussed between the staff and the child’s parent/carer only with an outside agency should it be deemed necessary, once parental consent has been obtained. During transition to school visits, your child’s key worker with have a brief discussion with the school teacher to talk about your child’s progress and interests. This helps to provide them with the information needed to support your child when moving over.

Parents/carers must respect our confidentiality rules and not discuss anything they may have heard or seen with other persons.

**Special Educational Needs**

We aim to provide equality of opportunity for all members of our group, and this includes children with special educational needs. Each child is able to progress at his/her own rate in all areas of development, and this is true for children with and without disabilities or learning difficulties. We are experienced in working in close liaison with professionals across the range of special needs, and we operate in accordance with the government’s Code Of Practice on special educational needs.

If you would like to discuss the groups’ ability to meet your child’s own needs, please talk to the pre-school leader, SENDCO or your child’s key person. Our full special educational needs policy is available to view in the policy folder.

**Administration and Fees**

From September 2019, fees are as follows:

Monday - Friday 09:15 – 12:15 £14.00 per session

Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday 09:15 – 2:15 £23.50 per session

Fees are payable **monthly in advance.** Your first month’s fees must be paid on your child’s first session. A late payment fee of 5.00 per day will be charged for overdue fees. **Fees continue to be payable if your child is absent due to sickness or holidays. If your holiday falls outside the normal school holidays, fees must be paid in full before your holiday is due to commence.** Each child’s attendance is conditional upon continued payment of fees. We reserve the right to terminate your child’s place and seek legal action to collect any unpaid fees should we need to do so. Four weeks’ notice is required when your child is due to leave pre-school.

**Government Funded Places**

At Big Top, we accept 2, 3 and 4 year old funded children. Children who are eligible to receive 2 year old funding, will do so the term after their 2nd birthday. A code issued by Bucks CC must be produced to pre-school prior to the funded place being offered. The child will be entitled to up to 15 hours per week, term time only, where available.

All 3 year olds are entitled to up to 15 hours Universal Funding per week, term time only, the term after their 3rd birthday, (with the exception of the summer term where the child needs to turn 3 on or before 31st March) where available. The relevant documentation must be completed and returned, along with proof of birth date.

Eligible children may also access the Extended funding of up to an additional 9 hours at Big Top. A code issued by HMRC must be shown and the relevant documentation completed prior to funding being accessed. A parent has the responsibility to re-confirm their eligibility every 3 months to ensure they continue to receive the Extended hours funded.

Funding can be rather complicated, please do ask for further information if needed.

**Requesting a place at pre-school**

We would like to thank you for taking the time to visit us today and we would love to welcome you to our Big Top family. If you would like your child to join us, you will need to complete the attached Registration of Interest form. We will contact you when we are able to offer you a place in the pre-school. Once you have accepted the place, we will organise a suitable date for your first settling in session. During this session, you will be required to complete the paperwork needed prior to joining us and will need to pay your administration fee of £20.00. **This fee is non-refundable, even if you decide to change your mind and not attend our pre-school.**

We hope that we have covered the main information that you need. If you have any further questions, or would like to organise a second visit, please do feel free to contact us.

The Big Top Team

(Buckingham Park)

Head Office: Setting Address:

The Big Top Nursery Ltd The Big Top Pre-School (Buckingham Park)

74C High Street Buckingham Park Community Centre

Waddesdon Jubilee Square

Bucks HP18 0JD Aylesbury

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Tel: 01296 658898 Tel: 07769979593

[Enquiries@bigtopnursery.co.uk](mailto:Enquiries@bigtopnursery.co.uk) buckingham\_park@bigtopnursery.co.uk

**Registration of Interest Form**

Full Name of Child ………………………………............................ Date of Birth…………………Age………

Address………………………………......................................................................................................................

……………………………….................................................................................Post Code..................................

Parent/Guardian 1 Parent/ Guardian 2

Name ……………………………….................. Name……………………………………………………...

Tel No: Home……………………………. Tel No: Home………………………………..

Mobile……………….................... Mobile……………………………….

Address………………………………............... Address………………………………...............................

………………………………............................ ………………………………...............................................

Email Address:………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………..

Days Required:

Monday am Tuesday am Wednesday am Thursday am Friday am

Tuesday pm Wednesday pm Thursday pm

Start date requested……………………………….......

**A non-refundable deposit of £20.00 registration/administration fee will be requested from you on your first settling in visit to secure a place. If your child is funded and they are not claiming any additional hours/services, this fee will not be chargeable.**

Office Use Only

Date form received………………………………… Start Date…………………………………..

Date place offered………………………………..................

Registration/Admin fee received ………………………………....................