Chestnut Playgroup



Prospectus

Chestnut
Playgroup
Linton

At Chestnut Playgroup we aim to provide a high standard of care and early year's education in our friendly, safe and stimulating environment, where your child is happy, healthy and creative. We work in partnership with parents/carers to lay the foundations for your child's education and develop your child's learning as an individual; knowing how to inspire and nurture them as they learn through play.

Our ethos is:



Sessions

Chestnut Playgroup offers preschool places to children from 2 years until school age.

We run sessions between Monday to Friday during term time. We offer morning, lunchtime and afternoon sessions each day, providing childcare from 9am to 2.30pm. Our session hours are Morning: 9am-12pm, Lunchtime: 12pm-1pm, Afternoon: 1pm-2.30pm. These are in line with the start and finish times of our two local schools, making it more convenient for families who have older children attending these schools.

Session Fees

The committee agrees session fees each year. Details of our fees are on the Admissions page of our website, or will be given on request.

There is a £20 Registration fee on acceptance of a place for all children unless they are fully funded upon starting, however, if you wish to make a donation this will be gratefully received. We also ask for 40p per morning snack to cover the cost of our morning snacks.

Fees are payable each half term and parents/carers will be invoiced accordingly. Fees can be paid through online banking. Bank details are given at the bottom of each invoice. Failure to pay fees or regular late payments may result in your child losing his/her place at playgroup.

A £25 late fee may be added to invoices that are not paid by the required date and where no alternative arrangements are made. The committee will try to accommodate the financial circumstances of all families and can arrange a flexible payment plan if necessary. Please speak to the Administrator or the Committee Treasurer. A late collection fee of an hours fees may also be charged at the discretion of the committee for any child collected late. Fees are reviewed yearly and are therefore subject to change (please check Admissions page on website for the most up to date information).

Nursery Education Funding

Currently, children receive Universal Nursery Education Funding from the term following their third birthday. Please note that for the purposes of eligibility, terms are from 1st January, 1st April and 1st September, irrespective of the actual date the term starts (this is set by the Local Authority). Parents/carers can claim up to **15 universal hours** at the playgroup per week, taken over 2 & a half days (half day includes lunchtime). Claim forms are issued to all eligible children and parents/carers are required to indicate how many of these hours they wish to claim for. We also offer **extended funding** ('30 hours') up to the 27.5 hours a week we are open, available for parents/carers who are eligible. We also accept **eligible funded two year olds** (starting once you have been approved by the relevant body and received a code). To find out what funding you may be eligible for please visit beststartinlife.gov.uk. **Any hours in playgroup over funded hours, will be charged at our standard hourly rate.**

Our Staff

At Chestnut Playgroup, we maintain the ratio of adults to children that is set through the Department for Education Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage. This helps us to give time and attention to each child, talk with the children about their interests and activities, help and encourage the children to experience and benefit from the activities that we provide, and allow the children to explore and be adventurous within the safety of the playgroup.





Staff work alongside children to encourage play and learning

All our staff are trained and qualified in Early Years Education.
We also have Bank Staff members who join our team to help regularly. All staff are DBS checked in line with Ofsted regulations. For more information please see the 'Our Staff' page on our website.

As well as gaining qualifications in early years care and education, Chestnut Playgroup encourages staff to undertake additional training to keep up-to-date with best practice and current thinking about early years care and education. All permanent staff receive training in First Aid and Child Protection, as well as Food Hygiene and Health and Safety procedures.



Playgroup Management Committee

Chestnut Playgroup is a Committee run playgroup and is therefore managed by a voluntary body of parents and carers. All committee members are DBS checked as they are involved with confidential matters that relate to the children and this confidentiality is strictly controlled and maintained. The committee and staff are supported by our Preschool Administrator.
We hold committee meetings at least once during each half term, and our AGM is usually held in September each year. If you would like to be involved or would like to know more, please speak to one of us. More information on the committee is in the 'Partnership with Parents/carers and how you can get involved' section later in the prospectus.

Ofsted

Chestnut Playgroup is Ofsted registered, and our registration number is **221914**.
A copy of our last report is on our website, or can be obtained from the playgroup, or through the Ofsted website.

Early Years Alliance

We are a member of the Early Years Alliance (formally known as the Pre-school Learning Alliance), which is a leading early years education organisation. As a member, we receive support and advice from the Alliance to help us deliver the highest possible standards of education and care. They also provide access to training for all staff.

Children's Learning and Development

A child's learning and development is guided by the Early Years Foundation Stage, which became law from September 2008, and was updated again in September 2021. The learning and development we offer at Chestnut Playgroup reflects the three prime areas:

Communication and Language Development involves giving children opportunities to experience a rich language environment; to develop their confidence and skills in expressing themselves; and to speak and listen in a range of situations.
Physical Development involves providing opportunities for young children to be active and interactive; and to develop their coordination, control, and movement. Children must also be helped to understand the importance of physical activity, and to make healthy choices in relation to food.
Personal, Social and Emotional Development involves helping children to develop a positive sense of themselves, and others; to form positive relationships and develop respect for others; to develop social skills and learn how to manage their feelings; to understand appropriate behaviour in groups; and to have confidence in their own abilities.

These prime areas are applied and strengthened by four specific areas:

Literacy development involves encouraging children to link sounds and letters and to begin to read and write. Children must be given access to a wide range of reading materials (books, poems, and other written materials) to ignite their interest.
Mathematics involves providing children with opportunities to develop and improve their skills in counting, understanding and using numbers, calculating simple addition and subtraction problems; and looking at numerical patterns.
Understanding the world involves guiding children to make sense of the physical world and their community through opportunities to explore, observe and find out about people, places, and environment.
Expressive arts and design involves enabling children to explore and play with a wide range of media and materials, as well as providing opportunities and encouragement for sharing their thoughts, ideas and feelings through a variety of activities in art, music, movement, dance, role play and design & technology.

Learning Through Play

Play helps young children to learn and develop through doing and talking, which research has shown to be the means by which young children learn to think. Chestnut Playgroup uses the practice guidance of the Early Years Foundation Stage to plan and provide a range of play activities which help children to make progress in each of the areas of learning and development. In some of these activities children decide how they will use the activity and, in others, an adult takes the lead in helping the children to take part in the activity.



Learning about planting and looking after vegetables

Session Structure

In line with best practice, a good balance of child-led and adult-led activities has been established, which ensures that the children's views and ideas are valued whilst following the framework set by the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Sessions



Children should arrive in good time to start the session.
Each child has their own peg to hang up their coat and bag.





Free-flow play is then available at times throughout the day with access to a variety of activities including messy play, creative activities, cooking, gardening, construction, imaginary and role play, educational IT games, and quiet reading time with a member of staff.

During the session, there will be a planned adult led activity.



We always have outside play to broaden and strengthen the children's learning experiences



During the morning session, drinks and healthy snacks are available. The children learn to select, prepare, serve and tidy away their own snack and to sit together, which encourages social skills. Drinks are also available in the afternoon session.

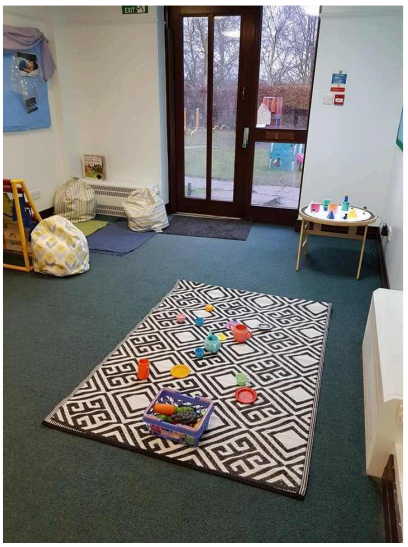


At the end of each session, the children and staff tidy together before sitting down for a story and/or song time.

Books, props and song bags are used, as well as listening to the choices of children for songs or nursery rhymes.

Settling In

We understand that your child's first few days at playgroup may be upsetting for both you and your child, especially if this is the first time that they have been away from you in a childcare setting. Some children will settle very quickly, whereas others may take a little longer, and we are sympathetic to children who do find this time difficult.



At Chestnut Playgroup, we have experience of helping children to settle into our playgroup. In our experience, children do settle better if their parent/carer(s) does not stay during the first few sessions as it can often prolong the settling in process. However, we understand that each child will react differently. We are therefore flexible in our approach. We will work with each child and their parents/carers to find the best way to proceed; a well-balanced approach to ensure that your child settles well. If you have concerns, please speak to the Preschool Leader, when your child starts playgroup for the first time.

Healthy Environment



Chestnut Playgroup encourages children to live healthily; learning that exercise and a healthy diet is good for you. For the most part, our sessions offer free-flow play, meaning that children can decide to play inside or outside and have the freedom to move between the two, whilst feeling safe and being supervised by our staff. In the wider garden area, a range of activities are available to them. Outside play includes planned activities which involve the children's interests through free play. We also have a vegetable, fruit and wildlife area, which encourages children to learn about growing healthy food and how surrounding wildlife can benefit these plants through pollination and ecology.

Non-Smoking Policy

Chestnut Playgroup has a strict No Smoking policy to maintain a healthy environment for both children and staff. Staff are not permitted to smoke on the premises and our policy requires that staff who need to smoke during break times take all necessary steps to reduce the effects of passive smoking when they return to the session.

Water Bottles

Drinking plenty, especially in hot weather, is important to every child. We ask that you provide a named water bottle for your child so that they may have a drink whenever they wish throughout the session(s). Water bottles will be refilled during the day if necessary.

Snack Time

Children are given a wide choice of healthy foods for their snack each day and are encouraged to try new foods. Snack time is always supervised by a member of staff and children select, prepare and serve their own snack and drink, sit with other children and then clear away their plate and cup. We will work closely with you if your child has a food intolerance or allergy. For full details on our food allergy policy, please see our 'Policies and Procedures' folder in the playgroup foyer, which is available to parents/carers. All Policies are also on our website.

Lunchtime Sessions

At Lunchtime sessions, children and staff sit together around a table to eat their lunch and are supervised by staff members. Parents/carers are required to provide a packed lunch for their child and, as we know that a healthy diet can improve a child's concentration and their ability to learn, we encourage parents/carers to include a healthy element, where possible. As it is not possible to refrigerate lunch boxes, we also ask that parents/carers include a cool pack to keep perishable items fresh.



We eat lunch and snack together

We have a strict no nuts policy which extends to snacks and parent/carer provided lunch boxes.

All shop bought food must have an ingredients list provided on first appearance in a lunch box to ensure no nuts.

For the safety of children all grapes, cherry tomatoes and other small foods must be quartered to prevent potential choking.

Preparing Your Child For School

Chestnut Playgroup has close links with Linton Infants School and much attention is made in preparing your child for the start of Foundation Stage at School. From teaching them the basic skills they will need in a school setting to giving them the confidence to interact in a larger group of children, the staff work with your child throughout their time at playgroup. We focus on their independence and practise some key activities like getting into and out of PE kits and being self-sufficient with toilet visits and personal hygiene.

In the summer term, Chestnut Playgroup and Linton Infants School work together to make sure your child is familiar with their new school; has met their new teacher and had the opportunity to enjoy fun activities at the school, such as story times and play sessions. The aim is to make them feel as comfortable as possible so that their first day will not seem so daunting.

Also, during the last few weeks of the summer term, the pre-schools and schools in the village collectively have 'Move Up Day', which involves each year group 'moving up' in school. Being part of this, the preschoolers who attend Chestnut Playgroup, will visit the Infant School for a move up session to experience time in school.

Our Garden



Our large garden has lots of space to play and learn



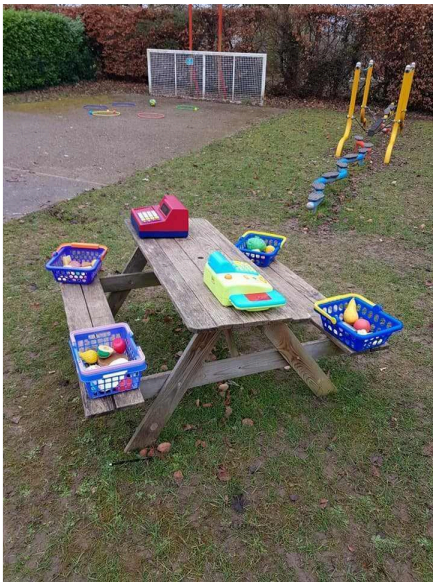
We like to explore in our garden





We love playing and "cooking" in our mud kitchen area





Assessment

We assess how young children are learning and developing by observing them frequently. We use information we gain from observations, as well as from photographs, of the children to document their progress and to assess how they are developing. We believe that parents/carers know their children best and we ask them to contribute to the assessment process by sharing information about what their child likes to do at home and how they, as parents/carers, are supporting development. All children have a Summative Assessment at their 'two year health check', as well as Summative Assessments when they are 3 and 4 years old.

Keyworkers

When your child joins the playgroup, a member of staff is assigned to them as their Keyworker. Your child's Keyworker will work with you to make sure that what we provide is right for your child's particular needs and interests. Your child's Keyworker will make regular assessments of your child's achievement based on our on-going records and the Early Years Foundation Stage development guidance. These individual assessments form part of your child's development and achievement record, called a Learning Journal. The Learning Journal goes with your child when they move on to school, or they move to a different playgroup or pre-school, so that the new setting can continue the assessment and aid transition.

Parents' Meetings

Twice a year, we hold Parents' Meetings which gives parents/carers the opportunity to spend ten minutes with their child's Keyworker and discuss how their child is progressing and developing and for both parties to review any concerns and plan for your child's future learning. Parents/carers may be able to give an insight into how their child reacts to certain situations, what interests their child and how they are teaching and developing their child's knowledge at home. In response, your child's Keyworker may be able to offer you ideas on how you can support your child in learning a particular skill or reflect on how your child was involved in an activity at playgroup.

Many parents/carers have found these meetings to be very informative and interesting as they hear how their child interacts and learns in the setting.

Policies

Our policies and procedures help us to make sure that the childcare we provide is of a high standard and that being involved in the playgroup is an enjoyable and beneficial experience for each child and his/her parents/carers. Our policies cover a full range of areas including safeguarding, health and safety, staff recruitment and administration.

The playgroup Committee and the staff work together to adopt the policies and procedures and also take part in the annual review of these policies. This review ensures that our policies are up to date and reflect EYFS guidelines and government standards and requirements.

From time to time, policies may need to be amended due to changes in government guidelines or legislation, or if recommendations are made that require us to make changes to a particular procedure. Chestnut Playgroup's policies and procedures are available on our website: www.chestnutplaygroup.org.uk/Policies. However, if you would like a paper copy, please ask a member of staff. An up to date paper copy is also displayed in the policies folder in the foyer of the playgroup if you wish to check something.

Safeguarding Children

Chestnut Playgroup has a duty of care in law to help safeguard children against harm. Our ratio of staff to children ensures that children can learn and play in a safe environment. All gates and external entrance doors are locked once the session has started and during free flow play, the outdoor area and indoor area are supervised by a minimum of two members of staff to each area, with special attention given to the gates and fences. Visitors to the playgroup are asked to sign in and provide identification and are not allowed unsupervised access to the children.

Children are also given the opportunity to learn about the importance of being safe and skills they need to do this.

Full details about how we safeguard children can be found in our Policies folder, which is available to all parents/carers.

Child Protection

Our playgroup policies and procedures ensure children against the likelihood of abuse within our playgroup and we have a procedure for managing complaints or allegations against a member of our staff.

Our way of working with children and their parents/carers ensures we are aware of any problems that may emerge and can offer support, including referral to appropriate agencies when necessary, to help families in difficulty.

All our permanent staff receive a minimum of Level 1 Child Protection training and our Preschool Leader and DSLs hold the more advanced Level 2 Child Protection training, making them a DSL (Child Protection Designate), which recognises this advanced training and makes them responsible for managing Child Protection in the playgroup.

Full details of the policies and procedures relating to safeguarding children are in our Policies folder, and on our website, which are available to all parents/carers.

Special Education Needs

As part of our policy on 'Supporting Children with Special Education Needs', we take account of any special needs a child may have. The playgroup works to the requirements of the 1993 Education Act and The Special Educational Needs Code of Practice (2001).

Full details on how we support children with Special Educational Needs can be found in our Policies booklet, which is available to all parents/carers.



Partnership with Parents/Carers and How You Can Get Involved

Chestnut Playgroup recognises parents/carers as the first and most important educators of their children. Staff see themselves as partners with parents/carers in providing care and education for their child. There are many ways in which we can work together to make the playgroup a welcoming and stimulating place for children and parents/carers.

Our Committee

The playgroup is managed by a voluntary body of parents and carers. Therefore, we rely on new parents/carers joining the committee as other parents/carers leave when their child starts school. The Committee is the management team for the playgroup and is therefore responsible for the managing of staff and all aspects of HR, admissions, health & safety, insurance, financial accounting, PR and fundraising. Being a member of the committee does require time and dedication but it can also be very rewarding and a lot of fun.

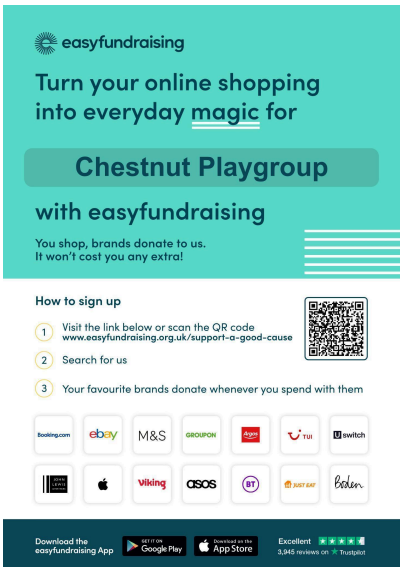
Meetings are held in the evening once each half-term but there may be the need for interim meetings from time to time to discuss event planning, or if an issue needs immediate attention. Being a committee member is an excellent way of becoming involved in your child's education and meeting new people. We hold our AGM during the first term of the academic year, where we vote in committee members and allocate roles for the year ahead, but new members are welcomed throughout the year.

If you would like to be involved or would like to know more, please speak to any committee member or come along to the next meeting. The date of the next committee meeting will be displayed in our newsletter and on our website.

Fundraising

As a charity, fundraising is a major part of our role as the Committee. With the support of our staff and parents/carers, we usually organise several different events throughout the year, to raise funds for the playgroup. The committee works together to coordinate and manage these events but we also ask for the support of parents and carers and the children's wider families to ensure their success. Very often, we raise funds for specific equipment needs. Previous events include a Quiz Night, Medium nights, Summer fete, Halloween Disco, jumble sales. We also fundraise through clothing collections, applying for local grants, and easyfundraising.

If you are not a member of the committee, you can still contribute your ideas for fundraising, or help out at playgroup events. Please speak to a committee member to find out how you can get involved.



Parent/Carer Helpers

If you would occasionally like to come in and help in the setting, please let us know. Being involved in a session enables parents/carers to see how the session is run day-to-day and to join in helping the children to get the best out of their activities. Parents/carers may bring their own experience and knowledge of a subject to the session, which can add a different dimension to the teaching. Further, you are able to see how your own child is learning and interacting during their time at playgroup.

Home Learning



All children get the opportunity to take home our 'home story' packs, which include stories and activities to do at home with their families. Staff regularly share ideas that children can do to extend their learning outside of playgroup, around activities that they are engaged in. This is communicated through Class Dojo and face to face in playgroup. We encourage families to download the app "50 things to do before you're 5" (info/links are also on our website).

Keeping You Informed

We know that it is important to keep you informed about what your child is learning and how they are developing whilst at playgroup.

Parent/Carer Consultation Events/Parents' Meetings

Twice a year, we hold our Parents' Meeting which gives parents/carers the opportunity to book a 10 minute meeting with their child's Keyworker to discuss their child's progress.

Occasionally, we hold parent/carer consultation events where we ask parents/carers to contribute views and ideas on how we run sessions, fundraising events and other issues relating to the playgroup. We also ask parents/carers to complete questionnaires during the year to consult with them on proposals to updates we'd like to make.

Committee Meetings and AGM (Annual General Meeting)

As a parent or carer of a child at Chestnut Playgroup, you are welcome to attend committee meetings and our AGM, even if you are not a committee member. We notify you of the date of our next committee meeting via a variety of ways of communication.

Our Website

The website www.chestnutplaygroup.org.uk is regularly updated so it's a good source of information.

Noticeboards

These are located in the playgroup foyer/cloakroom, and display a range of information relating to everyday activities and notices, to our Ofsted registration, insurance, and a copy of our policies and procedures. You will also find lots of useful information including information and playgroup forms for parents/carers, relevant leaflets and flyers, and local circulars.

Parent/Carer Email (Parentmail)

We will send out information to all parents and carers on upcoming events, news, reminders and alerts so that you are regularly up to date with what is happening currently at playgroup. Your personal details will remain confidential, and for playgroup use only.

Class Dojo

Class Dojo is a communication tool which Linton Infants School has used since 2016 and which has had great feedback. Using this tool makes it easier for parents/carers to engage in our playgroup and see what we are doing day to day. Class Dojo gives great opportunities for us to share information in the setting and at home.

Other Useful Information

Chestnut Playgroup Uniform

Optional uniform - sweatshirts and polo shirts, in a range of colours, with the playgroup logo are available to buy through specialise uniform company My Clothing: myclothing.com/chestnut-playgroup/6343.school (the link is also on our website).

It is not compulsory for your child to wear a playgroup sweatshirt or polo shirt, but they do have their benefits. They prevent children from getting their regular clothes messy and some children like the idea of wearing a 'uniform' in preparation for school.

Appropriate Clothing

We ask that you dress your child for the weather conditions, and with active play in mind.

Messy Play

Some activities at playgroup involve messy play with paint, glue, glitter, sand and soil. We do provide protective aprons for messy play activities but children may still get messy clothes from time to time.





Seasonal clothing

As we encourage the children to play outside throughout the year, they will need appropriate seasonal clothing and clothing for all weather conditions. Please provide your child with a warm and preferably waterproof coat, hats, gloves, scarves and wellies in the colder months, and when the weather is wet or we have snow. In the warmer months, please provide a sunhat, sunglasses and sunscreen (please note that sunscreen must not contain nuts).

Extra clothing

Some playgroup sessions involve water play, or in the event that your child has a toilet accident, your child will need spare clothes in order to change. Please provide your child with a small bag or rucksack, which contains spare underwear and clothing.

Labels

Optional name labels can be bought by parents/carers directly through: www.mynametags.com - use the Chestnut Playgroup ID 86534.

Pierced Ears

If your child has pierced ears, we ask that, for health and safety reasons, your child wears small studs for playgroup.

Potty and Toilet Training

We support parents/carers in training their child in potty and toilet training. We provide potties and toilet training seats so that your child can feel as comfortable as possible and children are supported in the continuation of whichever method of training you use at home.

Other Activities

Library Visits

Being located next to the village library, we visit the library as often as possible. Chestnuts have our own library card, which can be used by the playgroup, and the children can help select the books. We visit the library in small groups for story times so they will have time to look at the books and activities on offer. If your child is not already familiar with the library, we see this as a great way to introduce this service to your child and it encourages children to take books home and supports an interest in reading.

Community Events

Chestnut Playgroup is involved in community events throughout the year where possible. The children contribute to local festivals and the committee help to run events for the wider community. These have previously included:

- Linton Flower Festival, Christmas Tree Festival, Angel Festival – the children made flower arrangements, decorations for a Christmas tree, an angel to display in St Mary's Church, Linton.
- Scarecrow Festival - the children made a Scarecrow to display at Playgroup as part of the village Scarecrow Festival trail.
- Working with Linton Infants PTFA – we occasionally work on joint events.
- Linton Book Festival – the children are invited to take part in activities related to the festival.
- Picnic in the Park, Linton (stall).



