

Chestnut Playgroup



Prospectus
2021-22

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 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:

Learning
Opportunities
Values
Equality

Sessions

Chestnut Playgroup offers pre-school places to children from 2 years until school.

We run sessions on Monday to Friday during term time. We run two sessions each day with a lunch session to link the two for parents requiring childcare from 9am to 2.30pm. Our session hours are in line with the start and finish times of our two local schools, making it more convenient for parents who have older children attending these schools.

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Morning Session	9am – 12 noon				
Lunch Session	12 noon – 12.30pm				
Afternoon Session	12.30pm – 2.30pm				

Session Fees

The committee agrees session fees each year. From September 2021, our fees are £5.70 per hour:

Morning Session (3hrs) - £17.10
Lunch Session – (30 minutes) £2.85
Afternoon Session (2hrs) - £11.40

We charge 20p per morning snack charge 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 Pre-school Leader or contact the Treasurer of the committee.

Nursery Education Funding

Currently, children receive Nursery Education Funding from the term following their third birthday. Parents can claim up to 15 hours of pre-school sessions per week. Claim forms are issued to all eligible children and parents are required to indicate how many of these hours they wish to claim for.

We also offer extended funding up to the 27.5 hours a week we are open. This is available for parents who are eligible.

We also accept eligible funded two year olds. To find out what funding you may be eligible for please visit www.childcarechoices.gov.uk

Any hours, over the funded hours, will be charged at our standard hourly rate.



Staff work alongside children to encourage play and learning

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.



Our lead staff are:

Charlene Hayes – Pre-School Leader
Cache Level 3 NVQ Children's Care, Learning and Development.
Designated Child Protection, Designated SENCO and ENCO. First aid trained.

Charlene joined Chestnut Playgroup in March 2014 and has over 15 years' experience of working in early years care and education. She was promoted to Acting Deputy Leader in April 2015, before becoming Deputy Leader in September 2015 and Pre-School Leader in 2018.

Charlene is one of our designated Special Educational Needs Coordinators (SENCO), and is one of our Child Protection designates and our ENCO designate

Tracey Oldfield - Deputy Leader
NVQ level 3 in Early years Care and Education, designated child protection and designated SENCO. First aid trained, Food and Hygiene level 2 designate.

Tracey joined us in 2018 and has been qualified in the childcare profession for over 15 years. She previously worked with a local childminder, where she loved taking part in their weekly forest school sessions. Previous to that Tracey worked in a nursery with 2-5 year olds, which has enabled her to have a wealth of experience. She is level 3 qualified, paediatric first aid trained and has her level 2 food safety certificate.

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.

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 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 Pre-school Administrator.

We hold committee meetings at least once during each half term and our AGM is held during 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 and how you can get involved' section later in the prospectus.

Ofsted

Chestnut Playgroup is registered with Ofsted and our registration number is 221914. The last inspection report was completed in June 2019, and a copy of this 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.

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 in 2012. 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 to describe shapes, spaces, and measurements.

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, technology 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 and technology.

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. The session starts with an informal self-registration.

Free-flow play is then available 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 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.



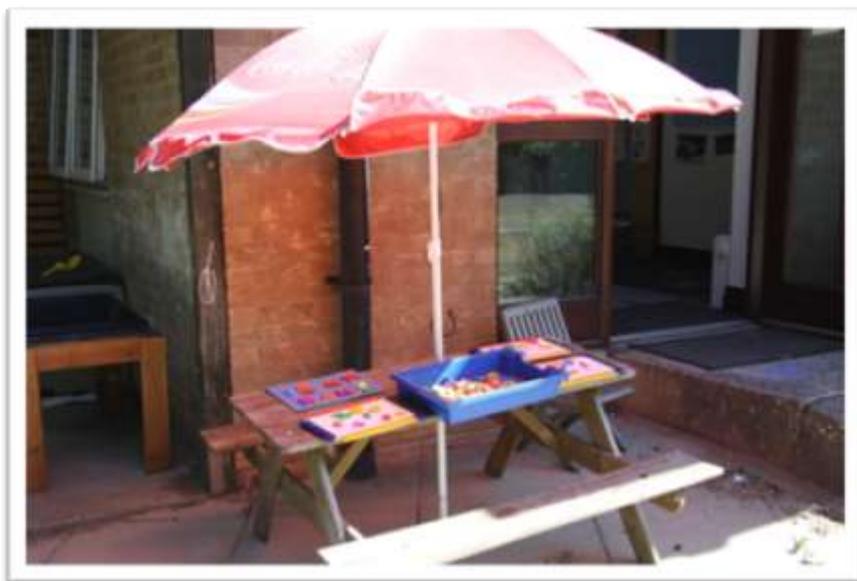
During the session, there will be a planned adult led activity.



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.

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.



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

Learning about planting and looking after vegetables



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 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 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 Pre-school Leader, when your child starts playgroup for the first time.

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 practice some key activities like getting in to 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 pre-schoolers who attend Chestnut Playgroup, will visit the Infant School for a morning session to experience time in school.

A 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. Children will spend some of their time with us outside; getting fresh air and natural daylight. In the wider garden area, a range of activities are available to them outside from trikes and space hoppers to fun games like skittles and hopscotch. 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.

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' booklet, which is available to parents.

Lunch Sessions

At Lunch sessions, children and staff sit together around a table to eat their lunch and are supervised by staff members. Parents and 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 and carers to include a healthy element, where possible. As it is not possible to refrigerate lunchboxes, we also ask that parents include a cool pack to keep perishable items fresh.

We have a strict no nuts policy which extends to snacks and parent provided lunch boxes. All shop bought food must have an ingredients list provided on first appearance in a lunch box to ensure no nuts or may contain nuts. For the safety of children all grapes and cherry tomatoes must be quartered to prevent potential choking.

We eat lunch and snack together



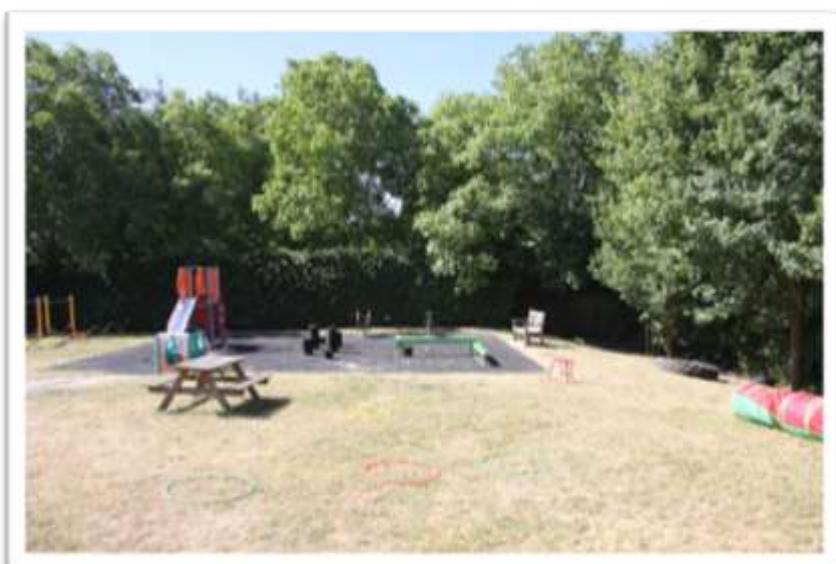
Water Bottles

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. Water bottles will be refilled during the session if necessary.

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.

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 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, are supporting development.

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.

Parent's Evenings

Twice a year, we hold Parent's Evening which gives parents 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 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 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. 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. However, if you would like a paper copy, please ask a member of staff. An up to date copy is also displayed in our foyer 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 and Procedures' booklet, which is available to all parents.

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 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 receives a minimum of Level 1 Child Protection training and our Pre-school Leader and Deputy Leader hold the more advanced Level 2 Child Protection training, making them a 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 the safeguarding children are in our 'Policies and Procedures' booklet, which is available to all parents.

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).

Our Special Needs Coordinators (SENCO) are Charlene Hayes and Tracey Oldfield.

Full details on how we help children with Special Educational Needs can be found in our 'Policies and Procedures' booklet, which is available to all parents.

Partnership with parents and how you can get involved

Chestnut Playgroup recognises parents as the first and most important educators of their children. Staff see themselves as partners with parents 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.

Our Committee

The playgroup is managed by a voluntary body of parents and carers. Therefore, we rely on new parents joining the committee as other parents 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.

Parent helpers

If you would occasionally like come in and help in the setting, please let us know. Being involved in a session enables parents 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 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

We set optional home learning 2-3 times a year. This is an opportunity for families to get together to support and embed learning carried out at playgroup. Home learning is gathered and displayed on the wall.



Fundraising

As a charity, fundraising is a major part of our role as the committee. With the support of our staff and parents, we organise several events throughout the year, to raise funds for the playgroup. The committee work together to coordinate and manage these events but we rely on 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, such as our popular annual Quiz Night, which has raised over £500 for playgroup equipment over the last three years.

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.

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 Consultation Events/Parents Evening

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

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

Committee Meetings and AGM

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 by through our newsletter and on our website.

Newsletters and our website

During each term, the playgroup sends out a newsletter to parents and carers, which updates you on what the children have been working on and information about upcoming events.

The website is regularly updated so it's a good source of information about upcoming events and dates for your diary.

Notice board

These are located in the playgroup foyer/cloakroom. Here we 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, relevant leaflets and flyers, and local circulars.

Parent Email

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.

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 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 Sweatshirts and Polo Shirts

Sweatshirts and polo shirts, in a range of colours, with the playgroup logo are available to buy through My Clothing (please find a link on our website). Prices start at £5.50 for a polo shirt and £9.00 for a sweatshirt. Examples of the clothing are available at playgroup.

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 wearing one at school.

For more information, please ask a staff member.

Appropriate clothing

We ask that you dress your child appropriately for the session activities and for the weather conditions.

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 sun cream.



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.

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 and 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.

Library Visits

Being located next to the village library, we visit the library as often as possible. Each child who wishes to take books out of the library must be registered with the library and have their own library card. We visit the library in small groups for story times so, even if your child does not have a library card, 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.



Other activities

Playgroup Events

In addition to our playgroup sessions, the playgroup runs events for the children and their families including family fun days, craft sessions and parties.

Community Events

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

- Linton Flower Festival – the children make flower arrangements to display in St Mary's Church, Linton.
- Scarecrow Festival - the children made a Scarecrow to display at Playgroup for the village scarecrow festival.
- Working with Linton Infants PTFA – Chestnut Playgroup occasionally works on joint events or contributes to community events such as hosting stalls and raffles.
- Linton Book Festival – the children are invited to take part in activities related to the festival.

**Chestnut Playgroup
Cathodeon Centre
Horseheath Road
Linton
Cambridge CB21 4LU**

Telephone: 07817 069696

www.chestnutplaygroup.org.uk



**Member of the Early Years Alliance
Registered Charity Number: 1090719**

