

Dear mums, dads and carers,

March 2016 Newsletter

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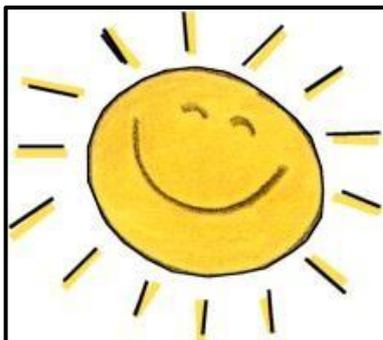
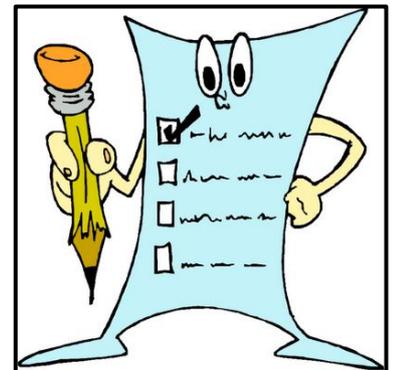
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Outcomes from Parents' Survey

Every year Islington Council asks Children's Centre users to complete a Parents' Survey. The responses are really important and help us know how satisfied parents are with our services. Last year Ambler received the most responses of all, so thanks to anyone who took the time to offer valuable feedback. Most comments were positive, such as: "Ambler is a warm and friendly environment, caring and thoughtful to individual needs" or "I'm very impressed by the lovely warm, caring and fun environment at Ambler nursery." However, there are always things we can improve and we welcome constructive criticism. Please see the display boards in the foyer for examples of how we're trying to resolve issues with prior notification of events, increasing the variety of toys and going on more outings.



New contracts and fees for Summer Term

Many children will soon be making the move up into new rooms, with some families also changing the hours or days they attend Ambler. Letters have been given to families who must prove their income levels and Islington families who must provide proof of address for the new financial year. Please see the admin office if you have any questions or want to check all your paperwork is up to date. The deadline is Friday 18th March 2016; otherwise you may be charged at the highest fee rate, until evidence is provided.

Staff sickness and agency cover

Some parents/carers will have noticed there has been more agency staff providing cover at the Centre than usual. This is due to several employees being absent from work for extended periods on long-term sickness and other staff taking remaining annual leave before the end of the financial year. Toddler Room has been particularly affected, but we always try to ensure continuity for the children by arranging for trusted agency staff to do regular shifts. We hope all our employees will soon be well enough to return to work, but if you have any concerns please speak to your Room Lead or management team.





Inset day at end of March

As you hopefully know, the Centre closes for five inset days per academic year. So far in 2015/16 we have had four, and the final Inset day of this academic year will be on Thursday 24th March. This will actually only be an Inset day for all Baby Room and Toddler Room children. Nursery children will still be able to attend the Centre, however, we will only be open from 9am to 3.30pm and offering no extended day services. There will also be no extended day services offered for Reception children. As such, please make sure that date is

highlighted in your diary for an 'early' pick up. If you have any questions or concerns, please get in touch with a member of the Senior Leadership Team.

Easter playscheme for Reception

Playscheme places are available for Reception pupils during the upcoming Easter holidays. These provide working and studying families with childcare outside of school terms. We can accept ex-pupils (children who were in the Nursery) and those who currently use our extended day services. Places are allocated first to Islington residents, second to those who work in the borough, and third to other applicants. A week's place from 8.30am-5.30pm costs £120.30 or a week's place from 9.30am-3.30pm costs £90.19. Concessionary rates are also available for those on work-based benefits. Please speak to the Children's Centre admin office for more details.



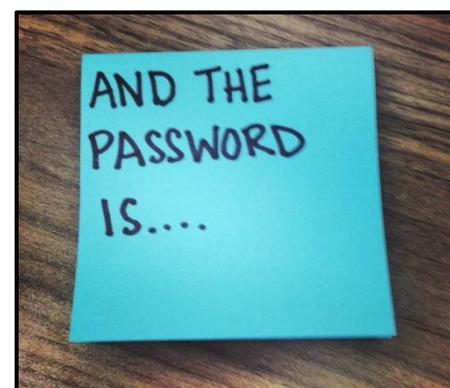
Free places for two year olds

We still have a few 'free' part-time places in our Toddler Room. Your child could be eligible for one of the 15-hour a week government-funded places if any of the following apply: *you are on benefits, earn less than £16,190, your child has special educational needs/a disability, your child is adopted.* Just complete the form online at www.islington.gov.uk/free2 and see if you're eligible. If you have any questions please speak to the Children's Centre admin office.



Picking up arrangements for all children

With many new families having joined in January, this is a good time to remind everyone about the rules on picking up children from Ambler. Please can all parents and carers remember to tell both the room and admin office if someone else will be picking up your child, giving their name and a password. This must be done on every single day that someone else will be picking up your child. The person must give the password on their arrival at Ambler or we will not allow your child to leave with them.





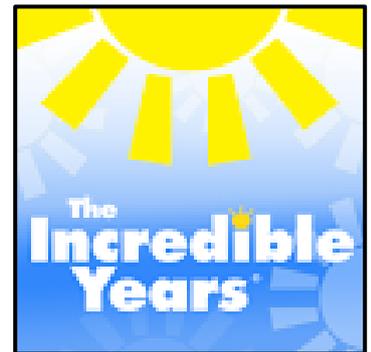
Grow Ambler's brilliant day in the garden!

Grow Ambler held a brilliant Family Day recently, when lots of families helped revamp our garden. Although the weather could have been better, the day itself was great! Our gardeners laid wood chip pathways, constructed wooden cold frames and built some pallet beds. To bring the day to a close, our hungry gardeners tucked into their picnics and used our pizza oven!

Thank you so much to all our parents and children who have transformed the garden. Grow Ambler are a green-fingered branch of Friends of Ambler. Please contact them directly at amblergardenproject@gmail.com.

Incredible Years parenting course starting soon

An internationally recognised parenting course is starting at Ambler soon. It's called 'Incredible Years' and is for families with 1 to 3 year olds. Parents from recent courses have given really positive feedback, saying: "The facilitator was really supportive and friendly, I could go to her with any problem." The course helps parents: learn how toddlers develop, gain skills and confidence to support and nurture, aid the development of their little one whilst having fun and improve their child's behavior. For more information or to book a place just call our Family Support Worker Sharon Norris on 02073541766.



Free vitamins available at Ambler

We distribute free vitamins at Ambler for all Islington and Camden children aged under four, pregnant women, mums with babies under one, and those trying to get pregnant. Just ask at the admin office or speak to one of the Outreach team. Good nutrition in pregnancy and early childhood leads to better health and helps children to grow and develop. Vitamins are essential nutrients that your body needs in small amounts so that it can work properly.



Who to speak to and governance

We aim to have open communication. Your child's key person and then the room lead will be the people you have most contact with. However, there may be times when you want more support from the senior leadership team of **Honorina Lukulay**, Assistant Head, or **Lorna Prynne**, Early Years Foundation Stage Co-coordinator.

Our Advisory Board parents are **Christine Langford** and **Ram Deb. Nadine Mellor**, parent of a Reception child, and **Mary Stevens**, parent of a Nursery child, are also on the Governing Body.

Communication and feedback

Each child has a pigeonhole labelled with his/her name. Please check this daily as this is where you will find any up to date communications from us. If you have any compliments, complaints or suggestions to help us improve our services for all our children and families, please fill in a feedback form (available from the foyer).

Very best wishes from **The Ambler Team**



term dates and holidays

BR = Baby Room, TR = Toddler Room, N = Nursery
TTO = Term Time Only, AYR = All Year Round

SPRING TERM

Wednesday 23rd March

Last day for term time only children in BR and TR

Thursday 24th March

BR and TR closed for Inset day

No extended day care for Nursery or Reception, but school open as normal

Friday 25th March and Monday 28th March

Children's Centre and school closed for Easter bank holidays

Tuesday 29th March to Friday 8th April

Open for AYR children in BR, TR and N/Reception Playscheme only

SUMMER TERM

Monday 11th April

First day of term for BR, TR and N/Reception

Monday 2nd May and Monday 30th May

Children's Centre and school closed for Spring bank holidays

Tuesday 31st May to Friday 3rd June

HALF TERM HOLIDAY - Open for AYR children in BR, TR and N/Reception Playscheme only

Monday 6th June

First day back for term time only children in BR, TR and N/Reception

Thursday 21st July

Last day of term – school and CC closes at 2pm for funded places

BR, TR and N open as normal for paying parents

Friday 22nd July to Thursday 18th August

Summer holidays - Open for AYR children in BR, TR and N/Reception Playscheme only

Friday 19th August to Friday 4th September inclusive

Closed for two week annual shutdown

AUTUMN TERM

Monday 5th September and Tuesday 6th September

Children's Centre and school closed for Inset days

Wednesday 7th September

First day of term for BR, TR and N/Reception (as Year One!)