



Little Cherries

Providing Early Years education through play

Getting Started Guide 2018

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How can I help to prepare my child for pre-school?

A little advance preparation can help your child settle into the routine of pre-school life.

- Attend stay and play sessions or other groups within the local community; support your child to explore the play activities available and engage positively with other children.
- Encourage your child to socialise with other children who are coming to Little Cherries. This is easier if your child is currently attending parent and toddler groups in the community, such information can be found at the local Children's Centre or the local library.
- Talk about Little Cherries in a positive manner – Talk about things your child likes to do and what they can do at Little Cherries e.g. painting, water and sand play.
- Your child will need a bag. It may help to let your child choose their spare clothes, favourite toy, blanket or other comforter to include in their bag, along with nappies and wipes, if needed.
- Ensure you and your child attend the two free, one-hour settling-in sessions prior to their start date (see below).
- Home visits are available at your request.

Settling into Little Cherries

We want your child to feel safe and happy with us. To facilitate the settling in process, Little Cherries has the following structure in place for you and your child:

- **1st one-hour settling-in session** – both child and parent/carer to attend. An essential time to meet your child's keyworker and other staff; for your child to familiarise themselves with the toys and activities available in Little Cherries; to discuss any concerns with your child's keyworker and for us to get to know your child and you.
- **2nd one-hour settling-in session** - both child and parent/carer to attend. An essential time for your child and their keyworker to bond through play and the various activities available. During this session, if you and your child are happy, you are likely to be encouraged by the keyworker to leave Little Cherries and return to collect them at an agreed time before the end of your one-hour visit.

- **First full session** - the intention will be that your child will attend for the 3 hour session. At the beginning of this, you are welcome to help settle your child, play for a short period and talk with the staff. Once you and the staff are satisfied that your child is settled, you will be able to leave them in our expert care and return at the end of the session.
- **Lunch Club** - If your child is attending Lunch Club, Lunch Club will not commence for your child until 2 weeks after the first full session. This is to allow your child to settle into Little Cherries and introduce a phased transition to a longer session. However, if your child will be attending Little Cherries all day, please discuss Lunch Club arrangements with your child's keyworker.

We do recognise that each child is individual and has different needs. Therefore the settling in process is flexible and, in discussion with your child's keyworker, may be adapted to suit your child. You will be supported for as long as it takes to settle your child.

When does Little Cherries start and finish?

- Autumn term opens on Thursday 6th September 2018. In order to help children to settle in, new children start at different times (younger children start later in the year.) You will be given details of your child's settling-in sessions and first full session once you have accepted your child's place at Little Cherries.
- Term dates for 2018/19 can be found on the Little Cherries website: www.littlecherries.org.uk.
- Little Cherries operates two separate sessions each day:
 - The MORNING session is from 9.00am – 12.00noon.
 - The AFTERNOON session is from 12.45pm – 3.45pm.
 - Where available, we can offer all day sessions 9.00am-3.45pm.
 - Little Cherries also offers a 45 minute daily Lunch Club service (12 – 12.45pm) for an additional cost of £3.25. Parents are required to provide their child with a healthy packed lunch. If a child is attending for the whole day, lunch club must be booked and paid for in advance. Places are limited so early booking is essential.
- Once collected, Little Cherries cannot be held responsible for your child.

- Please let us know by text message or e-mail if for any reason your child is not able to attend. If you have not informed us, a member of staff is likely to contact you to make sure that everything is alright. This is simply to make sure your child is safe and well.

First day procedures

- There is no parking on site. The car park is for staff use and disabled access only. If coming by car, please park on the road nearby with consideration for our neighbours.
- Please be on time for dropping off and collecting your child.
- Wait outside the gate until a staff member opens it. If you are arriving outside of normal session times, (e.g. for your child's one-hour visit session) please press the buzzer.
- Please note that only staff members are authorised to open/close the gate and parents/carers should not open/close the gate for others. This is to guarantee the safety of all children.
- Children will have a named peg where they can put their coat and bag.
- Children and parents will be welcomed by their key worker and be encouraged to begin free play.

First day checklist

- Bring a bag with spare clothes. Include a favourite toy, blanket or other comforter if needed.
- Ensure all coats, clothes, wellington boots etc. are clearly named.
- If your child is in nappies please supply, in a named bag, spare nappies, creams, clothes and wipes which can be stored on their peg.
- If the weather is wet, children will need a waterproof coat and may change out of boots into soft shoes, plimsolls etc. for indoors.
- If the weather is hot/sunny please ensure that your child has a named sun hat, and wears clothing which covers their shoulders. Please apply sun-cream to your child before they come to Little Cherries. Staff can re-apply a child's own sun-cream but it must be provided by the parent/carer and have the child's name on the bottle.

What should my child wear to Little Cherries?

- Little Cherries does provide aprons for messy activities such as baking, painting and gluing. New or expensive clothing is not recommended as accidents do happen.
- It is helpful for children to have a change of clothes in a named bag on their peg.
- 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 achieve this.
- Children must wear closed-toe shoes – no sandals.
- Please remove all jewellery. Jewellery that is worn for religious reasons should be discussed with your child's keyworker or the manager.

What snacks will my child be offered?

- We plan the menus for snacks to the food and drink guidelines as outlined by the Children's Food Trust, thus providing children with healthy and nutritious food. A list of allergens in the food we provide is available upon request.
- We make snack time a social time where children and adults eat together.
- Children are encouraged to try everything, but if your child has any strong dislikes or allergies please inform us on the registration form.
- If your child is a fussy eater at home you may find that in pre-school they will happily eat what others are eating, especially if they have helped to prepare it.
- Your child will never be forced to eat.
- Due to some of our children having a wide range of food allergies and intolerances, we cannot give out birthday cake, or any food or sweet related items for birthdays. However, we still celebrate and acknowledge a child's birthday by the giving of a card and the singing of 'Happy Birthday'.

Arriving and collecting your child

- The morning session starts at 9 am and ends at 12pm. The afternoon session starts at 12.45pm and ends at 3.45pm. Lunch club starts at 12pm. Don't arrive too early – you won't be able to come into Little Cherries until the gate is open for the start of the session, that being the morning session, lunch club or the afternoon session.

- Please be prompt to collect your child at the end of the session as late collection can be distressing for your child. Unless you have given prior notification in special circumstances, please do not expect to collect your child early since it also can be upsetting for a child to be removed from a group activity.
- For security reasons we ask that it is always an adult who brings and collects your child to and from Little Cherries.
- Little Cherries has a very strict policy on not allowing your child to go home with any person other than those named on the registration form.
- Should you need to change the details of the person collecting your child please contact us immediately.
- If for any reason you are going to be late in collecting your child, please contact Little Cherries as soon as possible. Please make yourself aware of procedures for uncollected children by reading our policies available on the website: www.littlecherries.org.uk. Please note we operate a late collection fee policy.

Who can I talk to about my child?

- Your child will have a keyworker who you will be able to chat to at the start or end of the session. If the keyworker is unavailable, please feel free to speak to any of the Little Cherries staff who will endeavour to deal with your comment/query.
- Please talk to our staff and share any information you feel may be relevant to how your child may be feeling that day, for example, they were awake very early so could be tired, there has been a change at home or a favourite toy has been misplaced.
- To help us get to know your child, please use the booklet '*What to expect, when?*' which is provided with the registration pack. We recommend ticking and dating things that your child is able to do. Sometimes your child will demonstrate different abilities at Little Cherries from the abilities they demonstrate at home. This will help us to plan suitable activities for their development. We will continue to use this booklet throughout your child's time at Little Cherries.
- If you would like a meeting or confidential chat with your child's keyworker or the Manager then it is best to make an appointment via the administrator email: info@littlecherries.org.uk.

Fees and payment

- For children not yet eligible for Early Years Funding (see information handbook for details), the current fee is £12.75 per 3 hour session and £3.25 for Lunch Club.
- You will not be charged for the 2 free settling-in sessions.
- Fees are payable in advance. You will be invoiced at the beginning of each half term.
- We prefer fees to be paid by bank transfer, cheque, childcare vouchers or through the government Tax-Free Childcare scheme. Fees can also be paid by cash.
- Fees are payable for all sessions, including if your child is sick or on holiday.
- Fees (or any other correspondence) should be placed in an envelope with your child's name and the amount enclosed written on the outside and placed in the secure posting box located in the corridor entrance. This will be emptied on a regular basis.
- Cheques should be made payable to 'Little Cherries'.
- Details of our bank account for bank transfers are on your invoice. Please use the first 3 letters of your child's surname and the invoice number as the reference. For example: child - Jon Brown, invoice number 12, reference BRO12.

As part of our agreement with Cambridgeshire County Council, we have been asked to notify them of any child that is taking an extended absence. Where a child is absent for an extended period, the County Council Early Years Funding team will decide on a case by case basis if they will continue to provide or cancel the funding for that child during their absence.

If a situation arises where the funding is cancelled, you will need to either:

- Make payment of £12.75 per session to keep your child's place;
- **or** cancel your child's place.

Keeping in touch and getting involved

- There will be a fortnightly newsletter with information about Little Cherries, the Committee and our fundraising activities. This newsletter is sent by email, displayed on the noticeboard and can also be accessed via the website. A paper copy is available on request.

- The website has news bulletins, information, policies, and other details – check in from time to time!
- If parents have an interest, talent or skill that they would like to share within the setting, please talk to a member of staff. Parents are welcome to come and enjoy a session at Little Cherries with their child.
- Come along to the AGM to find out about how Little Cherries operates and join the Parent Management Committee. This is vital for the continuation of the provision and is your chance to shape Little Cherries now and for the future.
- Maybe you would like to help with some of our fundraising events. Help is always appreciated to organise community events, social events (e.g. the Christmas party and summer trip) and fundraising activities. It's also a good way to meet and make friends with other parents.

What if my child is hurt or taken ill?

You will be asked at the beginning of the year to provide us with some contact numbers which we can use in an emergency. If your child becomes ill or has a serious accident while attending Little Cherries we will contact you immediately using your Emergency Contact Number(s). Please ensure that you inform us if any of the contact numbers change during the course of the year.

Please notify us if your child is not attending because of illness (or any other reason). If your child has had sickness and/or diarrhoea, they can return to Little Cherries 48 hours after the last bout. This helps to stop infection spreading. Information concerning exclusion periods of the common infectious diseases is available from staff. We follow the advice from the Health Protection Agency (HPA) regarding exclusion.

We also need to be informed of any medicine e.g. Calpol that has been taken before the session or of any injuries sustained prior to arrival (See our Administering Medicines Policy and our Safeguarding Policy at www.littlecherries.org.uk). Staff will need to complete a form with this information.

What if my child is in nappies?

- Please supply nappies, wipes and change of clothes in a bag labelled with your child's name. This can be kept on their peg.
- We do not hold spare nappies or wipes. You must supply everything your child will need.
- Your key person will be happy to work in partnership with you to toilet train your child.

For more detailed information please refer to the Information Handbook, available on the website or a paper copy on request.

