



COA Newsletter

Chelsea Open Air Nursery School and Children's Centre
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FATHERS STORY WEEK and BRING YOUR DAD TO SCHOOL DAY!

For several years past we have hosted a highly successful day where a variety of the children's fathers came in to nursery to join in a variety of activities indoors and out. It is equally important that young children have male role-models and that they have quality time to play and learn together. The involvement of Dad at this age has a positive impact research shows that their involvement is a key predictor in learning and has a substantial influence particularly on their sons' and daughters' reading interests, levels and choices as well as emergent literacy outcomes. So come and join us and read a story during the week starting Tuesday June 12th for **Fathers' Story Week** and /or come on Tuesday June 19th for

Bring Your Dad to School Day. If you need more information talk with your keyworker, Claire or Kathryn. There will be a sign up list in the entrance area shortly.

FEEDBACK ON OUR SATURDAY DAD'S GROUP: Soraya writes:

'At COA the first Saturday of each month is dedicated to fathers; we are kindly invited to play with our children and spend time with them at the nursery. From experience, I know that the children love to show off what they have done in class. My daughter is always excited and looks forward to this day and this is what makes me a proud father. In light of this, I would like to motivate more fathers to come and do the same as I do, because I know your children will appreciate it a lot, just like mine does. Thank you very much to the GREAT COA team for this amazing

opportunity we really appreciate your hard work.'



THE IMPORTANCE OF EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE:

The following are aspects of emotional intelligence:

- Self-awareness-the ability to recognize ones own emotions, thoughts and values and the impact of them.
- Mood management-the ability to regulate emotions and lessen internal conflict in order to adapt to changing circumstances
- Self-motivation-the ability to use emotions to achieve goals
- Empathy-the ability to read, understand and respond appropriately to



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others' emotions

- Relationship skills-the ability to listen to and support others, to manage conflict, and to communicate and co-operate with others.

Emotional literacy is all about reading signs and signals. Feelings are signals and they surge through us every minute we are awake and even when we are asleep too. Feelings are signals and the big ones matter. The ugly ones really matter as they can erupt if we don't learn to manage our emotions. Hence young children need our guidance in this important area of learning. If we provide them only with a hammer they will see problems as nails. Thus they need a range of tools and skills to use. Children are new creations which thrive like flower buds on being nurtured with warmth and encouragement. If damaged just like buds they will struggle to open, to love and to reach their potential.

So try the following:

- When things are positive celebrate your child's success at becoming a human being.
- Give them lots of eye contact at these celebratory times.
- Talk about how you are feeling as well as how you might feel if things were not so good.
- Talk about and point out faces around you, in books and on TV so children can learn to "read" facial expressions of emotion.
- Set and stick to agreed boundaries agreed when your child was aware and listening.

When times are challenging stand up for the few really important things and forget the small things
Then think about what your child is learning at nursery and how

important these are in their life-long learning!



SUPERHERO PLAY AND NURSERY:

Our children's enjoyment of popular culture is an area we often have to reconsider at COA. We always say that our teaching and learning begins with children's interests. However, as adults we sometimes shy away from these characters because of their links with weapons and other areas such as conflict and fall back on traditional fairy tales. Many early years' staff and parents fear such play can easily get out of hand and lead to fighting. Superheroes are one of the things which really excite young children and give them the opportunity to explore things that really matter to them. By supporting this interest we



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can extend their play from the characters by adding our own characters that can challenge and sustain their thinking skills. We can add quality by helping to make role-play props and providing costumes, developing story lines to add to higher level thinking. If we allow children to explore good and evil characters we need to remind them about the skills of conflict resolution e.g. *'Stop it, I don't like it because...'* and remind them about being kind, the difference between right and wrong rather than making snap judgments. Superhero play also allows children to explore fears and fantasies, test their physical abilities and create bonds. It helps language and literacy skills, supports schematic development, the exploration of empathy and the concept of being responsible and also helps children problem-solve and negotiate.



OUR COMMUNITY OPEN DAY:

We need your help with our annual themed open day which takes place on Wednesday July 4th. This is a day to book out leave from work or study for to join your child and us having fun together learning and raising much needed funds for COA to go on providing the "extras" such as the farm etc. throughout the year.

We need help in getting prizes for the following:

- Adult tombola
- Child tombola
- Raffle

We also will need many contributions of cold buffet dishes for adults for the International lunch we enjoy alongside the children who bring their own packed lunches.

We need practical help on the few days before the

event as well as on the day and in tidying up after. We are open only from 9:30a.m. until 3p.m. and your child can ONLY come if they bring a responsible adult. The theme is about good health and sustainability. There will be exciting workshops for children with parents/carers from Recro who will be making miniature gardens, Cloth of Gold who will be making a community banner for COA, Phillip Wells the Fire Poet who will be creating poetry about COA. We will also be able to learn to dance in Bollywood and Calypso styles!!! We are hoping the Mayor and some Councilors and governors will join us too! If you can help in any way please let Claire, Talia or Kathryn know.

CONGRATULATIONS:

Well done Hadya Ali for winning a prize in the RBKC Leighton House Arts Festival!



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Fathers' Story Week 2012

Chelsea Open Air Nursery and Children's Centre are supporting this year's Father's Story Week to raise awareness of the positive role fathers and male carers can give. Please come and join us in celebrating this role by signing up to read books/stories at the nursery during Thursday 14th June - Tuesday 19th June. You can choose to join us during the morning or afternoon sessions.



I wanted to let you know that I will shortly be taking time away from COA to take my maternity leave; my last day will be Friday 6th July. As I will not see you and the children at the end of the summer term, I would like

to take this opportunity to wish you all the very best for the future!

Michelle



'MATHS DOESN'T SEEM TO HAPPEN HERE':

I was reminded of this comment by a parent again quite recently. I explained that we are mathematical beings who learn to speak the language of mathematics from the world we live in from the time the alarm rings and on throughout the day... Maths is presented to young children in different ways. We do have a Problem Solving, Reasoning and Numeracy area where mathematical resources can be freely accessed on a daily basis to basically explore and solve problems. Some of these resources may not however always appear as typically

mathematical in origin. The other area is one based within the concept of problem finding in the environment indoors and out as well as the pattern of the planned day through the exploitation of play activities and routines. Thus mathematical learning will be evident in such areas as: *Role-play* can happen in a café, shoe shop, garage via prices, times, appointments, measures, recipes, plans, maps etc.

Construction with a range of different scale blocks, photographs and plans of real buildings, clip boards, tape measures, rulers and tools.

Graphics area provides a good range of free choice mark making materials including diaries, not books, cards, raffle tickets, squared and dotty paper, calendars, forms from the post office or bank plus examples of different scripts.

Making play dough at least weekly means the children



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learn from the process which includes measuring and materials. The dough itself can be used with a range of simple resources such as egg boxes, baking trays, cake cases, buttons, straws, string and candles. A range of tools such as knives, forks, spoons, pizza cutters and scissors can be added plus a play over too. *Creative area* allows a wide range of junk modeling to explore 2D and 3D shapes alongside mixing your own colours with powder paint and making role-play hats, cloaks and resources. *Small-world* can happen on the floor a table or outside. It can be a numbered car park with vehicles to a castle with flags and a dragon's cave... *Sand and water play* allows the materials to be used separately or together with a wide range of resources and naturally support the understanding of mass, capacity and volume alongside mark making. *In the garden* can include

patterns, similarities, differences and numbers on scavenger hunts, environmental walks, track making with wheeled vehicles etc.

Cookery/snack time can involve children in setting up the correct number of chairs, tools, aprons etc. as well as calculating within the recipe or how many children would like a slice of orange..

The key point is mathematics happens everywhere within a richly provisioned environment with wise and observant adults. It does not mean expensive resources but the staff who provide and maximize learning opportunities both as taught activities and through their day to day engagement with young children.



TIPS FOR SUMMER JOURNEYS WITH YOUNG CHILDREN:

My memories of journeys with three young children are rather mixed but seem to involve 10 minutes after setting off someone screaming 'He's taken my book...!' or 'I'm hungry!' or 'I need the toilet.'

So here are a few tips to make your journeys smoother:

- Make a packing list and keep it for the next time you go away.
- If going abroad make sure each baby/child has their own passport.
- Sew or attach a mobile phone number into any precious toy or comforter.
- Take a range of medications for



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fever, diarrhea and allergic reactions that you are familiar with.

- Pack a multi-tool knife, sewing kit and some sticky tape for running repairs in your suitcase.
- Keep a first aid kit, wet wipes and a small bottle of water with you at all times.
- Be ready for frequent loo stops and nappy changes
- Create a surprise bag of small items for each child to help everyone through the journey.
- Enjoy!



BEING AN ADVOCATE FOR COA:

I was thrilled to host a free Saturday conference morning for both parents using the nursery school and parents using the children's

centre recently. About 30 parents attended and listened to a fascinating talk by Professor Iram Siraj Blatchford from the Institute of Education. If you are interested in reading her presentation we will print off copies and we will also put it on our web site for you to access. A very big thank-you to the parents led by Fernanda from the Parents' Forum who provided and enabled the refreshments.

Chelsea Open Air Conference - May 26th

On a sunny and windy Saturday morning a group of parents - past, present and future - gathered to hear a fascinating talk by eminent Professor Iram Siraj-Blatchford from the Institute of Education at the University of London. We were very fortunate to have the chance to hear about her work especially as her usual audiences are

cabinet ministers and international policy makers!

She presented some interesting findings and insights gleaned from the Government commissioned research entitled "The Effective provision of pre school education study (EPPE 3-11)". Essentially her team are studying thousands of children throughout their early years and arriving at some good evidence based conclusions to support the benefits of pre-school education.

She also shared with us her insights from her own time as a teacher and parent in an extended and animated Q and A session.

Some of the conclusions of the study are that there is a significant link between the quality of pre school education and a child's intellectual and social development - with improvements demonstrated in a child's independence,



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concentration and sociability. There is also a significant relationship between these beneficial effects and the level of training of the staff.

An earlier age at start (from ages 2-3) is advantageous and children from disadvantaged backgrounds also do very well, especially in the context of mixed nurseries that include children from varied backgrounds, which is one of the leading principles at COA.

Boys and girls were shown to have different interactions with their parents - again COA caters for this by the presence of an outdoor environment into which the traditionally indoor literacy and numeracy activities can be exported.

In the home environment, children who are read to, visit libraries and play with letters and numbers also fare better. Overall playing

and *engaging* with a child is more valuable than pure focus on number and density of activities, regardless of social background.

Even though COA was not one of the centers included in the study, by the research criteria it would be defined as a high quality centre - and as such the children are benefitting tremendously.

Conversely, lack of pre-school education leads to less productive early school years, with the potential deleterious effects on *all* the children in a reception class, as a teacher has to spend proportionately more time on those children who have not been exposed to the beneficial influence of pre school education.

Professor Iram explained many other findings and for more details see: eppe.ioe.ac.uk

Finally, it was reassuring to hear that at the highest government levels there is an increasing realization of the great importance of early years education. The challenge ahead will be to transmit this into action so that it is reflected in future investment in centers such as COA - a challenge compounded by the current economic climate.

Magnus Arnander, parent



SHINE WEEK:

During the week of June 25th we will be celebrating a range of achievements by the children. These will include such areas as intellectual, physical and caring/emphasizing skills. The children will get to wear a special sash bearing the title of their achievement and we will



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photograph them.

CURRICULUM NEWS:

The summer term has brought with it a few days of sunshine and some warmer weather which we have all enjoyed enormously. A few highlights so far are:

Expeditions to Holland Park



Some children had the great opportunity to go on an expedition to Holland Park Ecology Centre, where they went pond dipping and on a mini-beast hunt in the woodlands. Through this expedition the children had the chance to observe a range of creatures up close, using a magnifying glass as well as the opportunity to consider and discuss their habitats.

Once they finished looking at the mini-beast and pond

life the children carefully return the creatures back to the place where they found them.

The two expeditions were thoroughly enjoyed by all who participated. Thank you to those parents /carers who were able to help.



Forest School



A small group of 8 children had the wonderful opportunity to partake in the Forest School programme. This consists of a six regular nature sessions in a woodland environment where children participate in activities and games designed to build

self-esteem, communication skills, independence and self-confidence through an appreciation of the natural environment. The children thoroughly enjoyed the learning experience.



Chicks



All the children had the great opportunity to observe the life-cycle of a chick. This year we had 11 eggs arrive in the incubator. We all waited with much anticipation to see what would happen; we were extremely successful with all 11 chicks hatching out. Once all the chicks had hatched out, we put them in their brooder. We helped care for the chicks by



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feeding and cleaning them out every day. Sadly we have now said good-bye to the chicks as they were all getting a little too big for their box! Sid, Loo, Lola, Ghost, Lilly, Peacock, Fluffy, Robin, Curly, Rosie and Tom, are all safely back at the farm. We were all very sad to see them go.



Diamond Jubilee Celebration

To coincide with all the other celebrations happening within the community, we decided to hold a 'Mad Hatter's Tea Party' linked to the story of Alice in Wonderland in honor of the Queen's Diamond Jubilee. The children all helped in making decorations for the big event, with cat and rabbit masks and bunting to hang in the garden. They also made jam tarts for our picnic lunch. Luckily the weather held out and we had an

extremely successful day. A big thank you goes to those parents who brought in food for the picnic lunch and to the parent's forum for organizing a great raffle.



WORRIED ABOUT YOUR CHILD GOING TO PRIMARY SCHOOL?

Then come along to Big Foot's excellent workshop to support you in helping your child in their next step. These two sessions will take place on Thursday June 28th at 9:30a.m. and 2:30p.m. Please sign up in the entrance hall in the usual way soon. This is the fourth year we have offered this help which is usually very well received.





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DATES FOR YOUR DIARY:

Monday June 11th: Parents meetings with keyworkers
Day-Staff training day-
COA closed (Please remember that Chris's group will be arranged at a later date.)

Tuesday June 12th: Philip Wells the Fire poet visits.

Father's Story visit week-
please sign up

Wednesday June 13th:
Farm visit day

Thursday June 14th:
Family Futures with Simon Lewis/Governors'

Curriculum visit morning

Tuesday June 19th: Bring your Dad to School Day/Follow the Flame workshops for the Olympics

Thursday June 21st:
Introduction to cake decorating a.m. Music and Story session for parents' p.m.

Monday June 25th: Shine Week

Tuesday June 26th: Philip Wells the Fire Poet 2nd visit

Thursday June 28th:
Transition to Primary School workshops for Parents and Carers 9:30a.m. and 1:30p.m.

Recro workshops for children

Cake decorating 2 a.m.
Music and story p.m.

Wednesday July 4th: Open Day-Please keep this day free in your diary and book a day off work/study to join your child at COA.

Thursday July 5th: Music and story p.m.

Governors meeting
6:30p.m. Observers welcome

Saturday July 7th: Dad's Morning 10-12.

Thursday July 12th:
Leaver's Picnic Event at COA 3-5p.m.

Friday July 20th: End of term Leaver's Sharing at 10:45a.m. for parents of leavers. ALL part-timers from 9-11:30a.m. All full-timers from 9a.m. until 1p.m.

Monday July 22nd:
HOLIDAY CLUB Starts.

The views expressed here are not necessarily those of the Chelsea Open Air Nursery School & Children's Centre