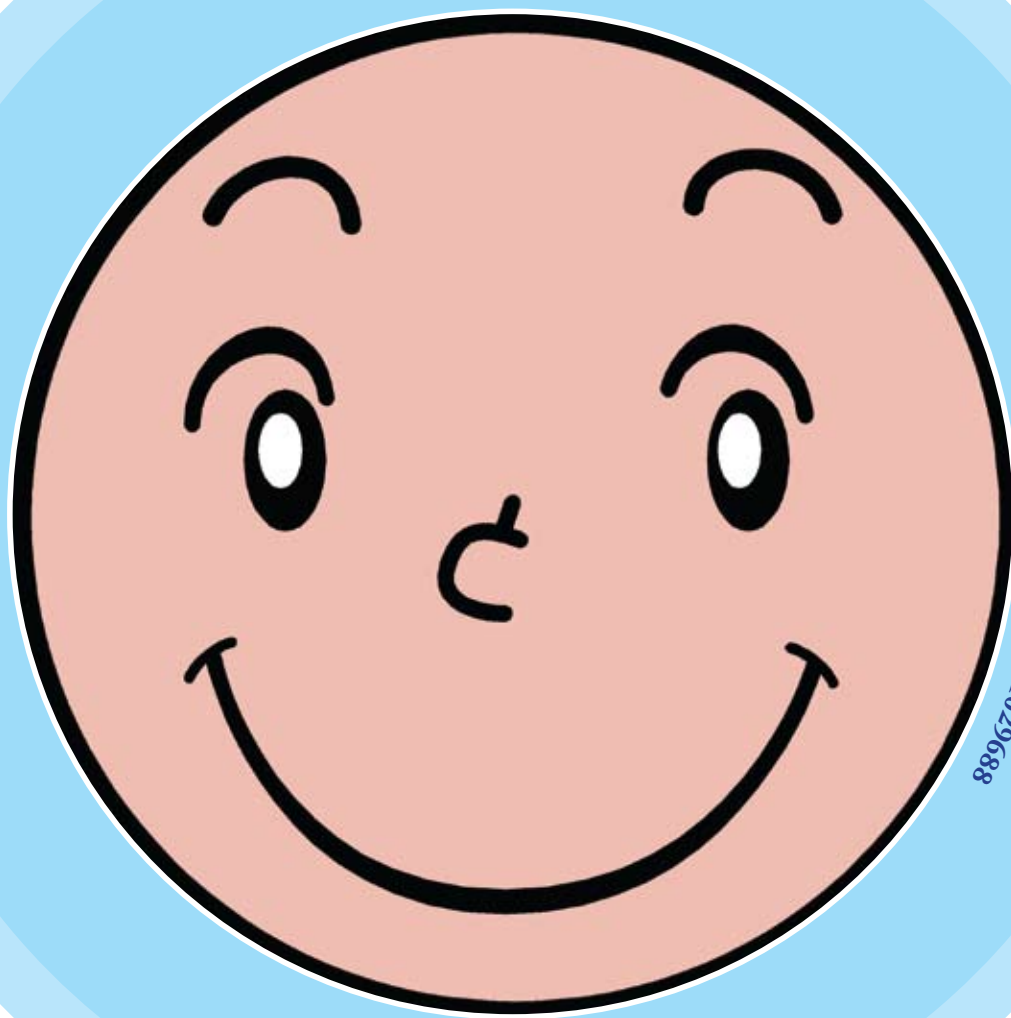


Happy Faces Playgroup

The Liddell Hall, Old Reading Road, Sherfield-on-Loddon, Hook, Hampshire RG27 0EZ



Est. 1982
Charity No. 1029688

PROSPECTUS

The History of Happy Faces Playgroup and a warm welcome from Peggy Hutchins – The Playgroup Leader



The Happy Faces Playgroup first opened its doors in 1982 when I moved to Sherfield-on-Loddon and found that the existing playgroup was fully booked with a long waiting list. With two pre-school children of my own and nowhere to send them, I decided to set up my own playgroup.

I arranged the hall, registered with Social Services (there was no Ofsted in those days) and, along with Tina, a local child minder, attended a ten week long Learning Through Play course. The initial open morning brought in seven children (two of which were mine) and the Happy Faces Playgroup was formed. The name came from Tina's son who commented on how very happy all the children looked, so Happy Faces it became.

We gathered toys from our own children's toy rooms and my husband made our first Wendy House. The playgroup children loved it.

After a year Tina decided to move on and a lovely lady called Betty Smith joined me. She stayed at Happy Faces until she retired. All Betty's grandchildren came to the playgroup and now her great grandchildren are attending. The majority of our children join following recommendations from our existing or past users and we now have children attending from Silchester, Chineham, Tadley, Sherborne St John and Basingstoke as well as the immediate catchment of Sherfield and Bramley.

The playgroup has grown in size and reputation over the years and I have consequently been joined by a number of other loyal staff members who love what they do as much as I do. Many of the existing team have been with me for well over ten years. I am very proud that Happy Faces is still going strong, and that I am now lucky enough to see the young children I once taught and played with become confident young adults and parents.

In addition to being the playgroup leader, over the years I have also immensely enjoyed running the summer play scheme and youth club. I've also worked at the Bramley School after school club and am currently working at the Sherfield School after school club.

We aim to provide a happy, child-centred, safe and stimulating environment at the playgroup. We have many special events which are held throughout the year which I'm sure I probably enjoy just as much as the children. These include the summer outing, the Christmas Play and Party, the end of term parties and the annual Easter Egg Hunt.

I hope I get the opportunity to meet with you and your children soon and thank you for considering Happy Faces Playgroup for your family.

Peggy Hutchins

"The staff ask the children age appropriate questions and offer lots of praise and encouragement which further helps develop their self-esteem and confidence"

"I love the welcoming, happy, mumsy environment. You feel that you are leaving your child in a very loving and caring playgroup"

"The children relate well to staff and confidently approach them for support, indicating trusting relationships are in place"

"Staff are enthusiastic and spend time playing with the children, helping them to develop new skills and make progress in their learning"

All comments included in this document have been sourced from the Ofsted report dated November 2007 or from the parents questionnaire completed during Spring 2008



Where, when and how much are our sessions

We operate from The Liddell Hall which is located at the rear of Sherfield-on-Loddon Village Hall. This relatively small hall provides an exceptionally warm, welcoming and cosy environment for pre-school aged children (2 years 6 months – 5 years). We also have a fully-enclosed garden for the children to play in.

We run a variety of sessions per week during term time only. We offer places for 26 children at any one session. These include; morning 9.15am – 12.15pm, morning plus lunch 9.15am – 1.15pm. All day 9.15 – 3.30pm (currently on Monday, Tuesday and Thursday). Lunch plus afternoon 12.30pm – 3.30pm, afternoons only 1.30pm – 3.30pm.

Our fees are payable termly. Your child will become eligible for funding for their pre-school/nursery education with effect from the term following their 3rd birthday. We will provide you with the necessary forms at the appropriate time. Fees continue to be payable if a child is absent due to sickness or holiday and each child's attendance at the playgroup is conditional upon continued payment of any necessary fees.



Accreditation and Ofsted

Happy Faces Playgroup is a member of the Pre-school Learning Alliance and is associated with The Children's Link. It is accredited to the Pre-school Learning Alliance's high standards and is registered with Ofsted and the local Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership. It also contributes to the Partnership's overall planning to provide education and care throughout the Foundation Stage.

In our most recent Ofsted report (November 2007) we were awarded "good" in every category. This means that every aspect of the provision is strong. A copy of the report can be obtained from www.ofsted.gov.uk.

For further information about the Pre-school Learning Alliance, please send a large S.A.E. for a free publications catalogue to the Pre-school Learning Alliance, 69 Kings Cross Road, London WC1X 9LL.

The Happy Faces team

We are very proud of our long-serving team of staff at Happy Faces Playgroup. We aim to provide a staff:child ratio of at least 1:6 (the current pre-school learning alliance guidelines are 1:8) at each session. This helps us to give time and attention to each child, talk with the children about their interests and activities, help the children to experience and benefit from the activities we provide and allow the children to explore and be adventurous in safety. All staff have been trained in Paediatric First Aid.

The regular playgroup staff are:

Name	Role	Qualifications
<i>Peggy Hutchins</i>	<i>Playgroup Manager</i>	<i>NVQ3 Early years care and education</i>
<i>Heather Symons</i>	<i>Joint Deputy Playgroup Manager</i>	<i>NVQ2 Early years care and education</i>
<i>Lorraine Russell</i>	<i>Joint Deputy Playgroup Manager</i>	<i>NVQ3 Early years care and education</i>
<i>Helen Belsham</i>	<i>Playgroup Assistant and Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator</i>	<i>NVQ3 Early years care and education</i>
<i>Gloria Rickwood</i>	<i>Early Years Practitioner</i>	<i>Training towards NVQ2 Early years care and education</i>
<i>Kim Serle</i>	<i>Early Years Practitioner</i>	<i>Training towards NVQ2 Early years childcare and education</i>
<i>Sarah Reynolds</i>	<i>Early Years Practitioner</i>	<i>Training towards NVQ2 Early years childcare and education</i>
<i>Catherine Pooles</i>	<i>Early Years Practitioner</i>	<i>Training towards NVQ2 Early Years childcare and education</i>
<i>Maria Alexander</i>	<i>Early Years Practitioner</i>	<i>Training towards NVQ2 Early years care and education</i>

All members of staff receive regular training and attend workshops and Learning Through Play courses to help them keep up to date with current thinking about early years care and education.

Happy Faces also keeps itself up to date with best practice in early years care and education through the Pre-school Learning Alliance's magazine 'Under Five' and other publications produced by the Pre-school Learning Alliance.

The Key person system and your child's progress

Your child will be allocated a key person before they join. You will be advised of who your key person is and will be introduced to them when you attend your introductory session. Our key person system gives each member of staff particular responsibility for just a few children and means that each child will have one special adult to relate to, which can make settling into Happy Faces much easier. In addition, the key person is in a position to tailor the curriculum to the unique needs of each individual child. The key person will maintain links with the child's home setting, work with parents, and observe and keep records about your child, to ensure that they are supported in reaching their full potential.

The curriculum

Children start to learn about the world around them from the moment they are born. The care and education offered by Happy Faces helps children to continue to do this by providing them with interesting activities that are right for their age and stage of development.

For children between the ages of 2 yrs 6 months and 5 years, we provide a curriculum for the Early Years Foundation Stage of education. This curriculum divides children's learning and development into six areas:

- personal, social and emotional development
- communication, language and literacy development
- Problem solving, reasoning and numeracy
- knowledge and understanding of the world
- physical development
- creative development

For each area, the curriculum guidance sets out early learning goals. These goals state what the children are expected to know and be able to do by the end of the Reception year of their education. For each early learning goal, the guidance sets out stepping stones, which describe the stages through which children are likely to pass as they move to achievement of the goal. Happy Faces uses the early learning goals, and their stepping stones, to help us to trace each child's progress and to enable us to provide the right activities to help all of the children move towards achievement of the early learning goals.

Happy Faces keeps a Learning Journey for each child. This helps us to celebrate achievements and to provide what your child needs to make progress. Information shared on your child's needs, activities, interests and achievements will enable the key person to identify your child's stage of progress. The key person will use the Learning Journey to assist them in producing a termly report and record of development on your child's progress. You are more than welcome to view your child's Learning Journey at any time.

The activities we include to help us teach the Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum are early letters, sounds and mark making experiences, puzzles and games, number and colour work, painting, role play, outdoor learning, modelling and individual and group activities.

If you would like to see a copy of the curriculum please email Carol our Administrator at: happyfacesplaygroup@hotmail.co.uk.

Playgroup sessions

Happy Faces believes that care and education are equally important in the experience that we offer children. The routines and activities that make up our sessions are provided in ways that:

- help each child to feel that they are a valued member of the group;
- ensure the safety of each child;
- help children to gain from the social experience of being part of a group; and
- provide children with opportunities to learn and help them to value learning.

Happy Faces organises its sessions so that the children can choose from - and work at - a range of activities and, in doing so, build up their ability to select and work through a task to its completion. At every session the following are available for the children to choose from: Painting corner, gluing and sticking table, adult-led craft activity related to the theme for the week, role play area and dressing up clothes, a selection of toys, books, games and puzzles.

The children are also helped and encouraged to take part in adult-led small and large group activities which introduce them to new experiences and help them to gain new skills, as well as helping them to learn to work with others.

Outdoor learning and activities contribute to children's health, their physical development and their knowledge of the world around them. The children have free choice and are encouraged to take part in the outdoor child initiated and adult-led activities, as well as those provided in the indoor playroom.

Happy Faces recognises the importance of free play and free choice by the children, and, whilst they are given every opportunity and encouragement to create their choice of artwork, we do not pressure them into doing so. Therefore, please do not be concerned should your child not produce a piece of 'work' to bring home from each session. Please remember that, by their very nature, children are individuals and each is different from another, and, whilst some, even at an early age, are eager to get to the 'art table' at every session, others may be happier making tea for everyone in the home corner, or getting to grips with their social and role-playing skills.

For an outline of a typical playgroup session at Happy Faces please see Appendix A.



The management committee

Happy Faces is a registered charity, and is managed by an elected committee, which ensures that major decision making is in the hands of the parents who use the group. The committee is responsible for managing the playgroup's finances, employing and managing the staff, making sure that the playgroup has - and works to - policies which help it to provide a high quality service, making sure that the playgroup works in partnership with the children's parents and organising fund raising activities.

Our Annual General Meeting is held in the Autumn term. It is open to all parents of children who attend Happy Faces, and is when the committee for the following year is elected.

The committee tend to meet every six weeks and it is a great way to meet other parents and to help the playgroup run smoothly and continue providing a wonderful, learning, fun environment for the children.

How parents can take part in the playgroup

Happy Faces recognises parents as the first and most important educators of their children. The staff see themselves as co-workers with you in providing care and education for your child. Happy Faces encourages parents and carers to help us provide a welcoming and stimulating place for both children and other parents. You can help us by discussing your child's needs, interests and progress with your key person, by attending a session and sharing your own interest or skill with the children (i.e. singing, cooking, dancing, playing a musical instrument or knowledge you may have on a specialised subject), helping us in maintaining equipment and materials used by the children, being a part of the management of Happy Faces by joining the committee (please see separate section), attending community activities which Happy Faces takes part in (i.e. Sherfield and Bramley Fetes), building friendships with other parents of the playgroup and attending fund raising events.

Policies

The playgroup's policies help us to make sure that the service provided is a high quality one, and that being a member of the group is an enjoyable and beneficial experience for each child and their parents.

The Happy Faces staff and management committee work together to adopt and review the policies. These reviews help us to ensure that the policies are enabling us to provide a quality service for its members and the local community.

If you would like to see a copy of our policies please email Carol our Administrator at: happyfacesplaygroup@hotmail.co.uk.

Special needs

As part of our policy to make sure that our provision meets the needs of each individual child, we take account of any special needs which a child may have. Happy Faces works to the requirements of the 1993 Education Act and The Special Educational Needs Code of Practice (2000). Our full Special Needs policy is available upon request.

Starting at Happy Faces

The first days

We want your child to feel happy and safe at Happy Faces. To make sure that this is the case, the staff will work with you to decide on how to help your child to settle in. We have a policy about helping children to settle into the playgroup - a copy is available upon request.

Clothing

Although we do provide protective clothing for 'messy' activities, it is best to send children dressed in clothes which are easily washable and not too new. We do have 'Happy Faces Playgroup' polo shirts and sweatshirts available to purchase should you so wish (further information will be provided to you in your welcome pack).

We encourage children to gain the skills which help them to be independent and look after themselves. These include taking themselves to the toilet and taking off - and putting on - outdoor clothing. Clothing which is easy for them to manage will help them to do this.



We would also advise you to clearly label any bags containing a change of clothing (and any other items brought in) with your child's name

Our Songs

The Happy Faces Song

*I've got something in my pocket that belongs
upon my face,
I keep it very handy in a most
convenient place.
You will never, never guess it if you guess a
long, long while,
I'll take it out and put it on, it's a
HAPPY FACES smile!*

It's Time to Go Home

*It's time to go home, time to go home,
Mummies are waiting, time to go home.
Goodbye, goodbye, goodbye.
(Blow kisses!)*



Appendix A

A typical session at Happy Faces Playgroup

We believe that Happy Faces will provide your child with a caring and nurturing environment. After many years experience, we have created a daily routine in which the children at the playgroup thrive. Although each day follows the same format, no two days are the same. Weekly themes are set at the beginning of each term to provide varied and structured learning. Weekly themes are set at the beginning of each term to provide varied and structured learning although can be adapted to follow children's interests as they arise.

The session begins with Peggy, or another member of the team, greeting the children at the door and noting time of arrival in the register. The children, with the help of their parent/carer, are encouraged to find their name on the coat stand to hang their belongings up on the appropriate peg. They then find their magnetic name tag from the table and place it on the self-registration board. The children also see if they have been allocated a job. We find this helps the children settle in and gives them a good sense of responsibility. This part of the daily routine also helps the child in recognising their own name. The parent/carer then settles their child at one of the learning areas and it is then time for the parent/carer to leave. If your child is upset or anxious, your child's key person (or another member of staff) will assist you here (and you are welcome to call later on to see how they are doing and check they have settled).

The children play until all the other children have arrived and then the chosen child of the day will bang the drum to signify 'tidy up time'. The children are all encouraged to help with tidying up.

Once the room is tidy another of the jobs is to ring the bell to signify 'mat time'. At mat time the register is taken, the weather is discussed, as is the day, date, month and season. The children help count how many staff, visitors and children are present on the day. The children and staff will sing the weather song and the Happy Faces song during the first mat time.

Once mat time is finished the children will have free play where they will be able to participate at both the adult led craft table and at the challenge table and can choose from a large number of resources in child friendly and easily accessible drawers. During this time the children can choose to have their snack at the self service café, where again they are encouraged to find their name tag, before washing their hands and sitting at the café. During this time the children will have their snack at the self service café, where again they are encouraged to find their name tag before washing their hands and sitting at the café.

The children will pour their own drinks (water or milk) with help if needed. They are also provided with a snack which will consist of a variety of fruit, vegetables and breadsticks. Another one of the jobs is to help prepare the fruit and get the café ready for the children's snack time.

The children may also participate in the adult-led craft activity, take turns on the computer and spend time in the outdoor learning environment.

Due to our high staff to child ratio we are lucky enough to have a helper supervising/participating at each station. This helps to ensure that the session runs smoothly and that no activity has too many children at any one time. It also gives us the opportunity to interact with the children and to really get to know them.

About 35 minutes before home time the drum is banged again to signify tidy up time. Again, once the room is tidy, the bell is rung for mat time.

During the second mat time of the session, the children join in at show-and-tell where they get the opportunity to stand at the front of the group (with a member of staff) and show the rest of the playgroup their chosen item. They can tell everyone why they have brought it, why they like it, along with anything else they may want to say.

Mat time is followed by 'circle time' where the children may listen to a story and enjoy songs, finger rhymes, music and movement or drama. The children who are staying for lunch will then continue with free play while the children going home will go to the book corner. These children and staff sing the 'time to go home' song.

At the end of the session the children and staff sing the 'time to go home' song.

At home time the door is then opened to the parents/carers for them to collect their child and their belongings, and to empty the child's drawer of any artwork and notices. Peggy or another member of the team will say goodbye to everyone as they leave and note time of departure in the register. During this collection time you will have the opportunity to speak with the staff about what your child has done during that day and how they have been.

For those children staying for lunch, once all the morning children and parents/carers have left and any afternoon children have arrived, they will wash their hands and sit down at the tables to have their packed lunches.

The staff eat alongside the children, modelling good behaviour and table manners and enjoying/encouraging conversations between children and staff. The children are encouraged to eat their lunch and are given help if needed in opening packets, unwrapping etc. The children learn to tidy up after themselves and place any uneaten food/wrappers in the bins provided. When they have finished their lunch, the children continue with free play until the children who come for the afternoon only session arrive at which time we have a short time together on the mat. The rest of the afternoon follows the same format as the morning session with child-initiated, adult-led and adult directed activities.

Appendix B

A leaving letter from a parent

This is the 3rd time I have written in the leaver's book and this time is by far the hardest. Previous years I have written little ditties - fantasy stories about the Fairies of Happy Faces. The smiling laughing fairies who looked after our precious buds - caring for them, loving them and nurturing them. This time I want to write something different - something more than a quick 'thanks' - something that would show how Happy Faces has become intertwined in my life.

My first little bud Izzy first stepped into Happy Faces back in October 2002. I don't know who was more scared me or her. I dropped her off - rucksack strapped to her back containing everything I thought she would need - rain coat (in case it rained), suntan lotion (in case it was hot), spare pants (in case she had an accident), spare clothes (in case she painted herself), sun hat(??), plasters(??), sterile dressing (??), drink, apple, my mobile number, our home number, contacts list, reserve contacts in case the contacts were out, 10p in case she needed to use the phone. Yeah I know talk about a neurotic mother - the poor thing struggled to walk with the weight of the bag on her little shoulders.

As I stood outside waiting for the doors to open I thought I was gonna vomit there and then - if it wasn't for the fact that I was carrying her little sister (Loulou) I think I would of. As the doors opened it was one of the strangest feelings - here I was leaving my most precious thing in the hands of someone I didn't really know but had spoken to several times. At this point I knew I had to trust my instincts and go with all the positive things I had heard about Happy Faces. Izzy stepped in and was greeted with the biggest smile from the kindest face I had ever seen. Peggy was warm and welcoming - like a mug of hot chocolate - that instant I knew it was all going to be ok. I know people believe in love at first sight but this was a case of trust at first sight. She welcomed my first born with open arms and instantly made Izzy feel special and welcome.

Over the next 21 months Izzy thrived and grew into a happy, content four year old. Everyday she woke up and wanted to go to Happy Faces. She talked constantly about the friends she had made and wondered what fun she would have that day. All the fairies looked after her and each day was a joy. Peggy and her fairies all worked 120% giving their time and making each child feel warm and special.

My second little bud, Loulou, started Happy Faces in September 2004. She had been coming to Happy Faces to drop Izzy off for a couple of years so the first day was different. She went in carrying her rucksack that this time only contained a spare pair of pants and clothes. Settling her in wasn't a problem - she was straight in, knowing exactly what to do and where to go. As Loulou settled in at Happy Faces she became more confident by the day.

When the day came for my third child Jack to start I felt that I was part of the furniture. Once again Jack walked in full of excitement and anticipation - he didn't even have a rucksack! ooo how things had changed. The high point was when Jack was Joseph in the Nativity Play following months of hard campaigning - neither girls had been a leading role - this was my last chance. I felt like one of those pushy mothers off the TV - you know the ones who want their darling Tristin to be the next biggest model. Poor old Peggy put up with my endless hints and t-shirts with 'Jack for Joseph' slogans. Bless her - she put me out of my misery and Jack WAS Joseph!!

As the years have gone by few things have changed. Peggy is warm and giving with her time and patience. She listens not only to the children but also to the mothers. Many a time I have fallen through the door late - stuck in traffic scared that my little bud would be left outside in the cold alone. Never. All the fairies of Happy Faces give their all to make the buds time at playschool happy and fulfilling.

Happy Faces is a place of warmth and goodness - I know to many of you I am probably ranting and you think - MAD WOMAN - but Happy Faces is unique and special and needs to be protected. The fairies work endlessly to make each day fulfilling and exciting.

Happy Faces will only continue to be great with the never-ending support of the committee. If you are a mother/father reading this and have never made it to a committee meeting - STOP and look around you - everything you see is for our children - to guide them and develop them into what they need to become to achieve in life. Without the support of the committee working alongside the fairies, Happy Faces would be just a playschool - not the inspiring and wonderful place that it is.



Happy Faces Playgroup

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For general enquiries please either phone us on: 01256 880903

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