



# WELCOME PACK

Information for parents

September 2021

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Website: [www.uleyplaygroup.co.uk](http://www.uleyplaygroup.co.uk)

Facebook: [www.facebook.com/uleyunder5s](http://www.facebook.com/uleyunder5s)

## Welcome to Uley Under 5s Playgroup

### INTRODUCTION

Uley Under 5s playgroup celebrated its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2015, and will hopefully continue for many years to come with the support of local families. Children aged 2 years to 4 years are welcome to join our friendly playgroup, where the emphasis is on children learning through play.

We are members of the Gloucestershire Playgroup and Toddlers Association (P.A.T.A.) and were last inspected by OFSTED in November 2016 when we retained our "Good" rating. We accept vouchers/authority funding for three and four year olds, plus Achieving Twos funding for eligible families.

The playgroup, although a registered charity, is run by a manager with support from parents of children attending sessions plus volunteers from the local community. A committee is elected by parents at the Annual General Meeting held in September, and is made up of parents plus members of the community. While the day to day running of the playgroup is the responsibility of the manager, the committee looks after marketing, fund-raising, etc. However, we hope that all parents will get involved in some way by supporting fund-raising events or helping out during sessions (setting up, packing away, helping with activities or outings, etc.).

#### Uley Under 5s Playgroup Committee 2020-21:

Chair	Alex Amos (parent)
Secretary	Jade Coates (parent)
Ofsted representative	Lizzie Coburn (community)
Treasurer	Annie Elvidge (community)
Administrator (fees)	Annie Elvidge (community)
Marketing	Natasha Jagger (parent)
General	Jayne Sargeson (parent), Melissa Watkins (parent)

### PLAYGROUP STAFF

#### ***Manager / Play Leader / key worker – Nicola Wood***

Nicola joined Uley Under 5s in February 2013 and was appointed manager on a permanent basis in May 2013. She has a Bachelor of Education (Hons) degree in Primary Education: Early Years / Key Stage 1 with a specialism in special educational needs, plus qualifications in safeguarding children, paediatric first aid and health and safety. Nicola lives in Stroud with her husband, daughter and a huge poodle.

#### ***Deputy Manager / Play Leader / key worker - Ellie Palmer***

Ellie will be returning to the playgroup in September as our Deputy Manager, having completed her training with us a few years ago. She has previously worked in a busy day nursery on the outskirts of Gloucester, and has experience of caring for children aged 2 – 4 years. Ellie holds a Level 3 Early Years qualification, plus qualifications in safeguarding children, paediatric first aid, British Values and the Prevent Duty. Ellie grew up in Cam but now lives near Gloucester with her partner and young daughter.

We welcome parent volunteers during our sessions. Please email Nicola at [manager@uleyplaygroup.co.uk](mailto:manager@uleyplaygroup.co.uk) or call her on 0789 658 7983 if you are interested.

### Key workers

Each child is assigned a key worker. This will be a permanent member of staff who will help your child to settle in, who will be responsible for monitoring their progress and sharing information with you regarding her/his learning and development. The key worker will collate an online journal of information using the Tapestry software that will include photographs to chart your child's progress. You will be given a password to access your child's journal from home. The journal can be exported to another setting or to a school when your child leaves Uley Under 5s.

## GENERAL INFORMATION

### **Opening Times and Fees**

Our opening hours are 8.30 – 1pm on Mondays for all children, then either 8.30–1 or 8.30–3 Weds–Thurs–Fri for 2 year-olds, and 8.30-3pm Wed-Thursday-Friday for all 3 – 4 year-olds. Children can be dropped off any time from 8.30am-9am, but will be billed from 8.30am. 3 - 4 year-olds will be expected to attend until 3pm from the half-term after they turn 3, in line with when government funding starts. Children are asked to bring some pre-prepared fruit in a rigid container for snack, plus a packed lunch in a separate rigid container and a water bottle (all labelled with their name). The children sit down together for snack at 10am, and again for lunch at mid-day. For children aged three and over, we charge £4.00p per hour. Please note: children are eligible for government funding for up to 15 hours free childcare from the term after they turn 3, and some may be eligible for a further 15 hours from 2017 (see 'Nursery Education Funding' section below). The hourly rate for children under three is currently £5.00p per hour due to the higher staff ratio required by Ofsted. Some children aged 2 may be eligible for 15 hours of funded childcare. Details of eligibility can be found at [www.glosfamiliesdirectory.org.uk](http://www.glosfamiliesdirectory.org.uk)

### **Tax Free Childcare**

If you are employed, you can arrange with your employer to take a set amount of money from your pay each month, which can then be used against child-care costs. The benefit to you is that this money is tax free. Details of the Computershare voucher scheme can be found on the link below. However, we are happy to sign up to other voucher suppliers to suit your employer's scheme. **Computershare:** [www.computersharevoucherservices.com](http://www.computersharevoucherservices.com)

The government are also hoping to introduce a new online government service to help working parents with the cost of their childcare. For every £8 a parent pays into a special online account, the government will pay in another £2 tax-free, up to a maximum of £2,000 per year per child. Parents will be able to pay for childcare directly from their childcare accounts if their childcare providers have signed up to the service.

Go to [www.gov.uk/childcare-calculator](http://www.gov.uk/childcare-calculator) to check which option would work best for you.

### **Nursery Education Funding**

The Government provides funding for all children aged 3 and 4. This entitles your child to Nursery Education Funding that covers a total of 15 hours of funded sessions per week. This can be shared between settings and/or childminders.

Your child will be eligible for funding in the Autumn term if their 3<sup>rd</sup> birthday is before September 1<sup>st</sup>, in the Spring term if their birthday is before January 1<sup>st</sup>, or in the Summer term if their birthday is before April 1<sup>st</sup>. Once your child is eligible for Nursery Education Funding, we will give you a simple form to complete.

From September 2017 some 3 and 4 year olds may be entitled to a further 15 hours of free childcare which can either be taken over 38 weeks (totalling 30 hours per week) or stretched over 50 weeks of the year. To be eligible for the additional hours, you (and your partner if you have one), must be working and earning the equivalent of 16 hours per week at the National Living Wage, live in England, and expect to have an income of less than £100,000 a year (£200,000 per couple). Full details about eligibility and exceptions to the above can be found by visiting [www.glosfamiliesdirectory.org.uk](http://www.glosfamiliesdirectory.org.uk), the government website: [www.childcarechoices.gov.uk](http://www.childcarechoices.gov.uk), or by calling the HMRC helpline on 0300 123 4097. If your child attends more than one setting the funding will be shared between the settings fairly. A top-up fee to each setting may be necessary to cover the cost of sessions not covered by the funding. An invoice will be issued if this is the case.

### **Payment of Fees**

An invoice for fees due is emailed to parents at the start of each term and collection is co-ordinated by the Treasurer and Administrator. Cheques should be made payable to *Uley Playgroup*. It is also possible to pay monthly; if parents wish to do this they should contact the Treasurer. Missed sessions must be paid for. Invoices must be paid within seven days. Please note that non-payment may put your child's place at risk. If you have any trouble paying your fees it may be possible to receive help from PATA. In these circumstances please speak to the Manager who will be happy to discuss this with you.

### **Forms for completion prior to start date.**

Please ensure that the following forms are completed and handed to the Manager on or before the first day your child attends playgroup:

- Registration form inc. emergency contacts, permission for emergency treatment and consent for sun block, outings, photography and sharing information with other professionals;
- Financial details for invoicing or funding plus a photocopy of the child's birth certificate if claiming funding
- GDPR consent letter.
- "All about me" booklet

The Manager also needs to see a full birth certificate to verify parental responsibility, and your child's red book to check that immunisations are up-to-date.

**Please note: we cannot accept responsibility for your child unless we have a completed set of forms on site.**

### **Fundraising**

We would appreciate it if everyone could help to raise money for the playgroup by using easyfundraising if you shop online. Apparently it only takes a minute to sign up, after which every time you click on the link before ordering goods online you raise some money for the playgroup! Use the following link to sign up: <http://www.easyfundraising.org.uk/causes/uleyu5s>

### **"Wish Money"**

To try and keep costs down, we ask that each child's family to donate £5 at the beginning of terms 1, 3 and 5. The money is used by staff to purchase special resources such as snack items, cooking or food items to celebrate cultural festivals such as Diwali, or craft supplies for one-off projects such as Mother's Day. None of the Wish Money will be used for general supplies such as cleaning materials or bin bags.

### **Absence**

If your child is unwell or will not be attending a session due to holidays, doctor appointments, etc. please let staff know by emailing Nicola. Staff will contact parents to query any unauthorised absences in accordance with Ofsted requirements.

Please do not bring your child to playgroup if s/he is suffering from a temperature or has experienced vomiting or diarrhea within the last 48 hours.

### **Settling in**

Settling In:

- You and your child are welcome to attend a couple of taster sessions free of charge prior to your agreed start date.
- We know that all children do things at different rates, and in their own ways. So while some may settle into playgroup very quickly and easily, others may take longer to feel secure. It may be the first time your child has been apart from you and your family, and we recognise that parents know their child best.
- We want you as parents/carers to feel **welcome to stay as long as you need**, until you feel your child feels safe and secure with us. Staff will work in partnership with you to leave your child for increasing amounts of time.
- When you leave your child for the first time, we will let you know how they are doing within the first hour. If your child is unhappy or upset for longer than 15 minutes, we will contact you and suggest that you return.
- All the staff are here to support you in separating from your child, and to support your child in separating from you. We understand how stressful it can be, so please discuss any concerns you have with the staff.

<b>Daily Checklist</b>
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We hope this checklist acts as a reminder of the bits and pieces that we would like you to bring with your child to playgroup and which should be left on-site each day, in order for us to provide quality care for your child.

### **Please bring to playgroup:**

- A pre-prepared fruit snack in a rigid container, labelled with their name
- A healthy, balanced packed lunch (i.e. one item from each of the four main food groups: sandwiches or wraps with a meat or cheese filling, one portion of fresh or canned fruit or vegetables and a pot of yoghurt with water to drink. We discourage chocolate spread, jam, crisps, processed foods (including processed fruit snacks such as yo-yos, strings, etc.), sweet drinks and sweet products such as chocolate, cakes or biscuits. We reserve the right to return this food to parents)

- A change of clothing (in case of accidents, spillages, etc.)
- A pair of Wellington boots for water play or wet weather (in addition to a pair of shoes for indoors)
- A sun hat in the summer months/warm coat during colder months

**Please take home:**

- All of your child's belongings – the Village Hall is used by a variety of people and unfortunately we cannot accept responsibility for items left behind.
- Your child's work for the day will be placed in a drawer marked with their name. Please check it on a regular basis and take any work home.

**COMMUNICATION**

**Absences**

Please advise the Manager by email or text if your child is unable to attend a session due to illness or family commitments. Please always advise us by email of any absences due to holidays.

**Phone number**

Should you need to contact the Manager or your key worker at any time, please call us on 0789 658 7983 or email us at [manager@uleyplaygroup.co.uk](mailto:manager@uleyplaygroup.co.uk)

**Website/Facebook**

News and up-to-date information regarding the activities each week, events and fundraising can be found on both of the above. New parents are welcome to join our Facebook community by contacting our Marketing Officer Natasha Jagger at [Natasha.skowron@googlemail.com](mailto:Natasha.skowron@googlemail.com) or going to our Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/groups/uleyunderfiveplaygroup/>

**Newsletter**

We issue regular newsletters by email. They contain important dates, a summary of activities for the weeks ahead and reminders of what to bring to each session. A printed copy can be found near the front desk at the hall during sessions.

**Complaints**

If at any time you wish to make a complaint please contact your child's key worker or the Manager. A meeting will be arranged as soon as possible to address your concerns and hopefully resolve them to your satisfaction. If, for whatever reason, you are not satisfied with the outcome of your complaint, the Manager will provide you with the relevant information concerning the appropriate procedure to take your concerns further as specified by Ofsted.

**Notice Boards**

Parent Noticeboards are always set up on the left of the hall as you come through the main door. These will display official documents including our registration certificate, insurance certificate, Ofsted details, etc. It will also advise parents regarding Key worker information, news of changes to funding or new government initiatives, etc. Please take the time to check the boards when dropping-off or collecting your child.

Copies of the playgroup policies, recent newsletters and our Planning Books are put out at every session for parents' information.

**The Aims of Uley Playgroup**

Staff at Uley Under 5s aim to provide opportunities which support all aspects of your child's learning and development, as required by the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (2021), which sets the standards for learning, development and care for children from birth to five. Its four guiding principles that should shape any early years setting are:

- every child is a **unique child**, who is constantly learning and can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured
- children learn to be strong and independent through **positive relationships**

- children learn and develop well in **enabling environments with teaching and support from adults**, who respond to their individual interests and needs and help them to build their learning over time. Children benefit from a strong partnership between practitioners and parents and/or carers
- importance of **learning and development**. Children develop and learn at different rates. (See “the characteristics of effective teaching and learning” at paragraph 1.15). The framework covers the education and care of all children in early years provision, including children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).

The EYFS learning and development requirements are made up of seven areas that must shape educational programmes in early years settings. Three areas are particularly important for building a foundation for igniting children’s curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, forming relationships and thriving, known as **the prime areas**:

- communication and language
- physical development
- personal, social and emotional development

Providers must also support children in four **specific areas**, through which the three prime areas are strengthened and applied:

- Literacy
- Mathematics
- Understanding the World
- Expressive Arts and Design

We will provide activities and experiences for children in line with the **educational programmes** for each of the areas of learning in the EYFS, as explained in our curriculum which will be shared with all parents and published on our website.

Here is an example of what happens during a typical session at Uley Under 5s:

8.30 am	Doors open, free play	11.45 am	Five minute warning
9.00 am	Carpet time: Hello song, special helpers for the day, introduction to activities.	11.50 am	Tidy up time
9.10 am	Free play plus key worker groups	11.55 am	Story/Singing/washing hands
9.45 am	Five-minute warning	12.00 am	Lunch time / free play
9.50 am	Tidy up time		
9.55 am	Story/Singing, then hand washing.	1.00 pm	Home time for under 3s (optional) Separate activities for under 3s / 3 – 4s (including Phonics, numeracy) *
10.00 am	Snack (fruit and drink).	1.30 pm	Outside play
10.30 am	Visitor or Group activity (physical play, singing, ring games, etc.)	2.10 pm	Five minute warning
		2.15 pm	Tidy up time
		2.20 pm	Story time / Show and Tell
11.00 am	Outside play	3.00 pm	End of session (Staggered pick-up 2.30 – 3.00 during pandemic)

\* Phases 1 and 2 of the Letters and Sounds phonics programme (used in most primary schools to teach children to read) and numeracy including early addition/subtraction