

Hillside Pre-School & Early Learning Group



Tuesday 4th March 2025

Dear parents and carers,

Welcome back after the half term break – and a special welcome to our new families who have recently joined us.

Learning Focus areas linking to the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)

Our main focus will be on the life cycle of the Frog. The children will observe frogspawn and notice changes as it turns into tadpoles and then hopefully into frogs. They will also be learning about how to care for living things and their environment (**Understanding the World, EYFS**).

We are also looking at favourite stories to tie in with World Book Day on the 6th March. We know that Hillside First school is encouraging their children to come in dressing up clothes to represent their favourite story on Thursday 6th March. Therefore, if your child wants to dress up on this day then they are very welcome to – **but please do not buy costumes for this, as we have lots of dressing up clothes and props at pre-school for them to use**. And of course, your child may not want to dress up at all, which is completely fine.

Term Dates

2025

Spring Term

World Book Day -
Thursday 6th March

Last day of Term before
Easter Break - Friday
4th April

Summer Term

First day of term -
Wednesday 23rd April

May Day Bank Holiday -
Monday 5th May -
Closed

Half Term - Monday
26th - Friday 30th May

Children return -
Monday 2nd June

NEW

Inset day - Friday 4th
July - Pre-school closed

Last day of Term -
Friday 19th July
(First School finish
Tuesday 23rd July)



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Next steps and ways to help at home -

At pre-school we are always reading books with the children and encouraging them to talk about their favourite stories. To extend your child's learning at home, please read to them and ask some questions about the story. It would also be helpful to show your child that the words are read from left to right (in English) and from the top of the page to the bottom (**Literacy, EYFS**). You can always support their imagination by thinking together about what might happen to the characters next? We have added some useful '**Top Tips**' for reading with your child at the end of this newsletter. Also, have another look at a video from the National Literacy Trust featuring one of our favourite stories, '**Whatever Next!**' by **Jill Murphy**. This video offers some valuable tips on how to make reading more fun at home. Click on the link here - <https://fb.watch/wStcVvTnSN/>



Illness and infection - At pre-school we are continuously encouraging hand washing and hygiene procedures to reduce the spread of infection and viruses. Please encourage your child to cover their mouth when coughing and throw tissues in the bin when used. As a reminder, we would ask that you please keep your child at home if they require paracetamol (e.g. Calpol) to reduce a temperature or are generally unwell. This will stop the spread of infection to other children and to the staff - we cannot operate without the correct staff ratio.

Headlice -We have had several cases of Head Lice recently. Please take the opportunity to check your child's hair for any lice or eggs. Any child who has head lice must be treated before returning to pre-school.

Lunch boxes - Please remember to cut any grapes and cherry tomatoes in half - lengthways, as they are a choking hazard when eaten whole. We suggest that you always do this at home also.

Additional inset day - The Initio academy (which Hillside First school is a part of) has designated **Friday 4th July 2025 as a staff training day**. Therefore, the pre-school will also be closed on this day.

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Remember to keep looking at our Facebook page for up to date information and photos of our activities and events. You can access both our social media pages and email by clicking on the icons at the bottom of this newsletter. For quick access to our Facebook page click here -



Don't forget to keep sharing your child's WOW moments from home! They love celebrating their achievements with teachers and friends, and it's a wonderful way to boost their confidence, oral language development, and learning. Scan the QR code to share your pictures or videos with us.



SCAN HERE

Thank you for your continued support. Although we are currently full, we are now looking towards September 2025 sessions availability. Your recommendation is our best form of advertising so please mention us to friends and family who may be considering pre-school places for after the summer holidays. If your child is staying with us for another year we will be shortly sending out a letter for you to let us know what days/times you would like from September 2025.

Kind regards,
Elaine Ford,
Pre-School Manager



Top 10 Tips for Reading with Toddlers

1 Read little and often - At this age, children tend to have quite short attention spans and may struggle to sit still and concentrate for a long time. Choose books that are short and simple and don't be afraid to stop reading time early and pick it up again later on.

2 Sensory experiences - Toddlers are still learning to understand the world around them using their five senses. Whilst enjoying books already engages their vision and hearing, sensory books can help them with their overall sensory development. Choose books with different textures, flaps to open or even sound buttons. This means storytime can be even more interactive and engaging.

3 Embrace repetition - As parents, sometimes it feels like we know our children's favourite books off by heart! Although reading the same things over and over again may test our patience, children absolutely love repetition - they find it comforting and familiar. It also helps them to learn. Repeating the same text many times helps children learn new words and aids their comprehension skills.

4 Have fun! - Don't be afraid to get silly. There is no right way to enjoy a story. Make silly faces, do voices for characters, act out scenes together and wear costumes while you read! Reading is supposed to be fun - if you embrace that, so will your child.

5 Talk about it - Don't just read the words on the page - talk with your child about the story and ask questions. Ask your child to describe what is going on in the pictures. How is the main character feeling? What do they think will happen next? This is a great way to build understanding and language skills, as well as help bring the story to life.

6 Remove distractions - Most adults probably couldn't concentrate on a book if their environment was too noisy and distracting - toddlers are the same! Turn off the TV and radio, put away tablets and mobile devices. Take time to enjoy a book together without anything distracting or disturbing you.

7 Give choices - Children love to make their own decisions, as it makes them feel grown-up. Give your children a choice of the book you can enjoy together. Provide books on a variety of topics, based on their interests. Not only will they look forward to reading as an opportunity to choose for themselves, but they will also find the story more engaging.

8 Join in - Choose books that include repeated phrases, rhymes or refrains. After reading a few times, your child may be able to join in. This can help them grow in confidence with reading and can aid memory, language development and familiarity with rhyme and phrasing. Try getting the repeated phrase wrong - your child will enjoy correcting you!

9 Use props - A fun and engaging way to bring a story to life is by using different props. Toys and puppets can be used to represent the different characters and places in the story. Children can move the items themselves, helping them become more immersed in the story and understand the narrative better. Even simple stick puppets work great!

10 Get out of the house - One of the great things about reading is that it can be done anywhere! If you carry an [on-the-go bag](#), add in one or two small books. These are perfect for when you are on public transport or waiting at the dentist. As a treat, take your child to your local library and let them choose some books to read there and to take home.