

Once you have decided that we are right for you and your child, please complete the registration forms and return them to us. We can then discuss your child's requirements in more depth. Thank you.

## Contact Us

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***“Where Children thrive and flourish”***

Monday to Friday 09.00 to 15.00 including lunch  
(subject to demand)  
Flexible start and finish times

*We are registered with Ofsted and are an accredited member of the Pre-School Learning Alliance*



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- Late or missed payments will incur a 'late payment charge'.
- If there are fees outstanding at the end of the half term, a £10 late payment charge will be added to the invoice the following half term.
- If outstanding fees are carried over, the child may not be able to attend additional hours at the preschool (or may be lose their place) if alternative arrangements for payment have not been made.
- Fees must still be paid even if a child is off sick or on holiday, unless 4 weeks' notice is given.
- Due to staffing issues, it is not always possible to swap sessions
- An alternative session will be offered, or a refund will be given where appropriate, if Stepping Stones has to close unexpectedly or is unable to operate a session.
- Please ensure there are sufficient funds in your account for a cheque to clear. Any bank charges incurred as a result of insufficient funds or failure to clear a cheque will be passed on to the cheque signatory.

## 23. Fees Policy

- It is our intention to make our setting accessible to all children and families from the local community in line with our Equal Opportunities policy.
- All children are entitled to a maximum of 15 hours of childcare funded by the government at no cost to parents, starting from the term after their third birthday
- Where a child attends more than one setting, the 15 hours may be divided between the settings.
- Any hours the child attends at pre-school in addition to those hours they have claimed will be charged to the parents at the current rate charged by the pre-school.
- Any child who is not yet entitled to funding from the government will have to pay for all hours attended at the rate currently charged by the pre-school.
- It is the intention of Stepping Stones pre-school to provide affordable childcare places for everyone. We reserve the right to increase charges as required to cover the cost of running the setting.
- All invoices will be provided to the parent at the end of each half term for the next half term so they can be paid in advance.
- Flexible payment options are available to help parents spread the cost of the invoice so they may pay weekly if preferred.
- It is important that all fees are up to date by the date shown on the invoice

## About Us

### 1. Introduction

Stepping Stones Pre-school is a friendly community preschool based in the heart of Fordingbridge at the Avonway Community Centre Annexe. We are a registered charity who is passionate about providing children with the benefit of early year's education, regardless of their background or circumstances.

### 2. Our Aims

Our aim is to deliver a high standard of childcare through a variety of means to cover all aspects of the EYFS and to be accessible to all children between the ages of 2 and 5 years.

Our vision for the future is to improve our Ofsted rating to 'Outstanding', making our provision one of the best in the area.



### 3. Parents

Our relationship with parents is important and paramount to meeting the needs of the children and preparing them for school. We ask all parents to complete a questionnaire twice a year which we take into consideration when reviewing our Business Plan and our areas for improvement within our objectives.

We have started an informal monthly coffee morning, inviting parents to come in and share ideas and experiences.

We worked with parents to write our vision statement and we have been very pleased with the response from parents so far. Using words to describe us such as happy, caring, kind, safe and go above and beyond.

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*"Parents are the first and most important educators of their children"*

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### 4. Children's development and learning

Stepping Stones children learn through a range of learning opportunities consisting of child-led play and carefully planned adult activities. Some adult activities are planned in the moment following the children's interests and play. Our inclusive approach to curriculum delivery ensures that all children learn together are able to fully participate and learn alongside one another. Our enabling environment gives children what they need to flourish.

For more information on how we provide for development and learning, please read our **'Learning through play'** booklet.

### 5. Parent Help

We welcome you into our setting to share any talents (music, drama, art, reading stories, an interesting job.) We are also very grateful for any extra help during the sessions. It is very rewarding and gives you an insight into your child's day. Please speak to a member of staff if you would like to do this.

### 20. Funded childcare

All children are eligible for 15 hours a week funded childcare from the start of the term after their third birthday. This amounts to 570 hours for the year. It may be that if your child does 15 hours a week and is not in our inset days, that you go over these hours slightly. If this is the case, we will inform you at the start of the term and you can decide whether you want to pay for the extra hours or reduce them.

Some children may be eligible for 30 hours a week free childcare. In addition to this, some children are entitled to 15 hours a week free childcare from their second birthday. This is claimed through us, from the local authority.

### 21. Our Fees

Our hourly rate is £6.00 for 3-4 year olds and £6.50 for 2 year olds. The reason there is a difference in rate is because the staff ratio is higher for 2 year olds. We offer discounts for a second sibling. When you register your child, we ask that you pay a £25 deposit which will hold the place and be refundable at the point of your first invoice being issued. We send invoices out twice termly but if you prefer, you can pay weekly. This can be cash, cheque or electronic transfer. For more information, please see our Fees policy.

Stepping Stones is a not for profit charity and all the money we receive is used to cover our running costs or put back into resources for the children. We rely on a healthy cash flow and so ask that invoices are paid promptly. We may have to ask you to pay an outstanding invoice before we allow your child to continue attending.

### 22. Payment during absence

Unfortunately, we still have to charge you if your child is sick or away. This is because we have to staff the classroom according to how many children are due to be in. The exception to this is if you are able to give us 4 weeks' notice (for a planned holiday etc.)

Children are encouraged to play outside whatever the weather so please come prepared. Please can you ensure that all the children's removable clothes. I.e. coats, hats etc. are labelled. If it is wet or snowing, please bring in wellies. We also ask that you bring in a pair of indoor shoes that can be left at pre-school.

When appropriate, please apply sun cream to your child before preschool. If staying all day, please pack your child's own sun cream and you will be asked to sign a permission slip for staff to reapply for the afternoon session. Please provide a sun hat for the summer and sensible outdoor shoes (no flip flops).

### **17. Mobile phones**

We ask all parents and visitors not to use their mobile phones while in the preschool. This is to protect you and your child. All staff and visitors to the preschool are asked to leave their mobiles in the admin office where they will be safe.

### **18. Activities**

Please see 'learning through play' for more information on our daily routine and how the children learn through play. We run different events throughout the year which children and parents look forward to. For example, trips, sports day, sponsored obstacle course, Easter, Halloween and Christmas fun days and other celebrations. Please keep an eye out for newsletters and on the parent notice board for more information.

### **19. Local community**

We believe it is important to forge strong relationships within the local community. We buy snack from our local grocers. Our Staff also work closely with the local Infant's school to help our children make the transition to school as smoothly as possible. We are based in the town centre, the one Pre-school with this asset. We arrange visits to preschool throughout the year from our local fire brigade and police.

## **6. Safeguarding**

Our setting has a duty under the law to help safeguard children against suspected or actual 'significant harm'. Our employment practices ensure children against the likelihood of abuse in our setting and we have a procedure for managing complaints or allegations against a member of staff.

## **7. Special needs**

To make sure we meet the needs of each Individual child, we take account of any special needs a child may have. We work to the requirements of the Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice: 0-25 years (2015).

**Our SEN Co-coordinators are Sam and Vicki.**

## **8. Settling in**

Initially your child and you will be invited to come and spend an hour or so 'settling in'. This is usually arranged for later in the morning when all the other children have arrived and settled in. This is an ideal opportunity for us to observe your child at play and for you to see the staff and children in action too. Parents often find these sessions helpful and it makes the separation process a bit easier, for parents just as much as the children. These sessions are free of charge. You will be given an age appropriate 'all about me' profile to complete with a member of staff where you will have the opportunity to tell us about anything special to your child. For example, what they like to play with and any special words they might use. This helps us to get to know your child before they start. The more we know, the better, so staff can build on their interests to help with their learning.

## 9. Group learning books

The new early year's foundation stage sets out how your child learns and develops at the setting. One of the main components was less paperwork and spending more quality time with the children rather than writing up observations and tracking reports. At Stepping stones we have group learning books where children, staff and parents can look through and see what we get up to on a weekly basis. These books will be for all to access during preschool hours as well as our open days and community events. Please ask your child's key worker about these.

## 10. Policies

Our policies help to ensure that we are providing a high-quality service. These include: **Child protection; Suitable people; Staff qualifications, training, support & skills; Key person; Staffing ratio; Health & Safety; Suitability of premises & environment; Equal opportunities and Information & records** A full copy of which is available in the reception area of preschool for you to see at any time. Our policies are reviewed annually, and parents are welcome to feedback on any of them.

## 11. Personal data

We have procedures in place for the recording and sharing of information about you and your child that is compliant with the principles of the General Data Protection Regulations (2018). There are further details in our privacy statement which we provide you with on registration.

## 12. Communication

Communication between preschool and parents is so important. All children are issued with a book bag when they join. Please bring this in every session. All notices, information and your child's work will be put in the bag. If you have any notes for us, they can also be put in the bag. We also use email to update parents/ carers with newsletters etc.

## 13. Well Being

It is important that you inform us of any medical needs or allergies that your child may have. All our staff are trained in paediatric first aid but if they feel that an injury needs more professional attention, they will contact you straight away. Please ensure that we have an up-to-date contact number which can be used in an emergency. If your child receives an injury but it is not deemed an emergency, we will write it in the accident book and ask you to view and sign on collection.

## 14. Sickness/ Absence

If your child has an upset tummy or sickness bug, we ask that you please keep them away from preschool for 48 hours after the last incident, Returning. **Please can you let us know if your child will not be in, whether it's due to sickness, a holiday or a family day out.**

## 15. Outdoor Learning

This is learning in the 'outdoor classroom'. The sessions are run by our outdoor learning leader and activities typically include bug hunts, nature trails, climbing trees, crafts and den building. Children get the opportunity to make and walk on a rope bridges and swings and cook outdoors. These sessions promote confidence and self-esteem and are about having fun in a safe stimulating outdoor environment. You will be able to use your child's 15 hours (or 30 hours) towards this if you would like your child to attend.

## 16. Clothing

Please send children in older clothes that you don't mind getting dirty and wet. Alternatively, Stepping Stones polo-shirts and jumpers are available for children at a cost of £10.50 each. Please complete an order form if you would like one.

# A place of play and learning

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*"Everything your child does at preschool prepares them for school."*

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## **Our Typical Daily Routine**

### **Morning 9.00am to Midday**

The children are offered time on the mat where staff read a story and talk about any special events or activities planned and discuss the 'Golden Rules'. The children have free flow access from inside to the outside where there are a wide range of activities and resources covering all areas of development. At the end of the morning session, children are encouraged to tidy up before coming together on the mat again for songs. We have a self-select snack area and children are encouraged to wash their hands and select their own snack, promoting independence.

### **Lunch Club Midday to 1.00pm**

All children are welcome to stay for lunch if they are able to sit and eat at the table. It is a very sociable time and children are encouraged to eat all their lunch. We promote healthy eating.

### **Afternoon 1.00pm to 3.00pm**

The afternoon session is run along the same lines as the morning, with free flow access inside and out. The afternoon sessions are traditionally quieter than mornings and we aim to introduce smaller group work, particularly in preparation for those children who will be starting school the following September.

### **Encouraging independence**

At Stepping Stones the children learn through exploration, discovery, experience and encouragement. We follow the Early Years Foundation Stage framework (EYFS) which the children will continue into their first year at Infant school. In choosing their own resources the children are making their own choices. We encourage all children to be independent as much as possible and allow them to take and assess (reasonable) risks in their play. Children are encouraged to share equipment using sand timers.

### School readiness checklist:

- ✓ Between the ages of four and five, children should be prepared to be separated from their parent or main carer.
- ✓ Children should be able to clearly demonstrate their ability to listen and follow age appropriate instructions
- ✓ Children should show an interest in a variety of subjects, paying attention to the subject or activity they are taking part in
- ✓ Children should have enough of a range of vocabulary and language to express their needs, feelings, thoughts or ideas
- ✓ Children should be able to identify themselves by name, age, state factors in their life, name family members etc...
- ✓ To be able to interact in an age appropriate way with another child or adult
- ✓ Children should be able to interact, share and play, taking responsibility for their actions, understanding repercussions for their actions
- ✓ Focus on and also show interest in the work they are undertaking
- ✓ To be able to observe, notice, discuss and ask questions about their environment and experiences
- ✓ To be able to engage with books, have some understanding of words and language
- ✓ Respond to boundary setting
- ✓ Vocalise their needs such as toileting, thirst, hunger illness etc...



Schools will also work with parents, enabling a coordinated response to needs as they arise, supporting children and their families as they work on issues that can hamper school readiness.

As a parent, you can encourage good communication through modelling language, explaining things, questioning, showing, encouraging and providing interactive play and engagement throughout the day.

For children who attend a nursery, pre-school or childminder setting where the Early Years Foundation Stage or similar is implemented, there is ample opportunity for children to learn, grow and thrive.

These settings also provide the ideal environment for identifying any potential issues that may take longer to resolve.

Parents who feel they have a child who is struggling to meet some of the 'school readiness' markers should contact their health visitor or GP.

All of whom are well placed to provide the early intervention required to support parents and children through the transition from toddlerhood, pre-school years and on into later childhood.



We have boundaries within the setting, and we have some golden rules. We explain to the children what is unacceptable behaviour and the importance of being kind to each other.

## Learning through Play

### Craft/Mark Making Table

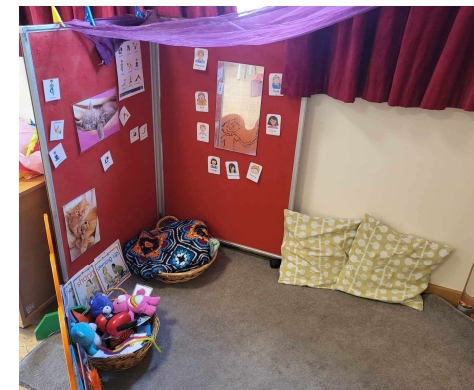
Children are free to explore and experiment with paint, mark making tools and other resources. Exploring colours and texture and develop mark making skills.

### Investigating area

Children can develop their number and shape skills. Counting objects such as dinosaurs, coins etc. There are also traditional resources such as puzzles and peg boards. The children love exploring all the natural resources such as shells, pebbles etc. and we include topics such as growth and life cycles.

### Cosy Corner

After Covid, we noticed children struggled with their self-regulation and understanding their emotions. Creating a safe space to understand and explore their emotions with an adult is crucial for their development.



## Book area

Children enjoy stories and often act out or retell them. That's why we have them throughout our provision. Children can sit and look at books either independently or with staff. The children's pre-reading skills start here as they learn to hold a book correctly, turn pages and even begin to recognise letters.

## Flour, gloop and playdoh

As well as having fun, children develop mark making and fine motor skills. Drawing circles, lines and sometimes even letters as well as rolling, cutting and moulding.

## Small World

Great for imaginary play, language and communication and interacting with friends. This is always a popular area where friendships are made and imagination is endless.



## Construction

Great for problem solving. It is also a great sense of achievement when they start to make things that are recognisable. We have a large construction area outside where children build dens, cars, trains etc.

## Role Play

Children's biggest role models are their parents so there is always a 'home corner' set up. Role play helps children's social and communication skills.

## School readiness, what is all the fuss about?

We all want our children to be ready to enter school, equipped with all the essential skills required to self-care, think like a responsible little person and behave well.

Your child will be ready in their own time, all children develop at their own pace and as long as parents and carer's are supporting them in their work towards responsible self-care and self-regulation, that is the best that can be done. The rest will come in time.

Staff will add to group learning journals for all children which you may access at any time. Daily observations and assessments undertaken by all staff, your child's key worker will help identify the next steps required to help your child learn and develop. Any questions or concerns please raise them with your child's key worker or any member of staff.

## How to help your child be school ready

Everything your child does at preschool prepares them for school. Parents have an important role in teaching their children skills to equip them during their school years.

- Spend time with your child sitting at the table at home to get them prepared for mealtimes at school. Making sure they can use cutlery
- Let your child practice getting dressed and undressed and using fastenings such as zips and buttons. Your child will need these skills at playtimes and PE.
- Being able to use the toilet is an important skill when starting school. Teaching them to use the toilet properly and wipe, flush and wash their hands.

*(Information taken from [www.southernhealth.nhs.uk](http://www.southernhealth.nhs.uk) )*

