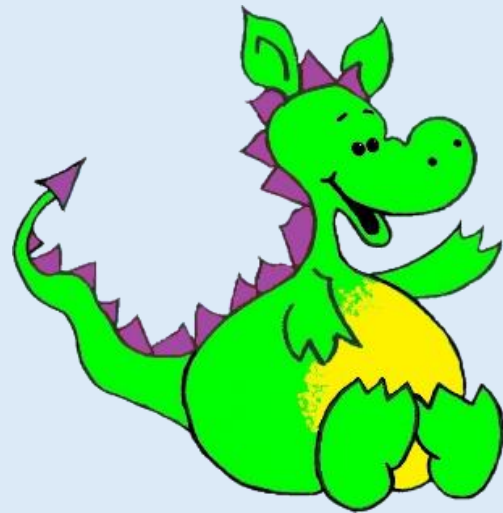


Welcome to the

Berkshire Healthcare Nurseries



Preparing your Child for Nursery

Welcome

Welcome to the Berkshire Healthcare Nurseries. We're delighted to welcome you and your family to our nursery community. We look forward to supporting your children as they learn, grow and develop, and to sharing this special part of their journey with you.

Whether your child is six months old or three years old, starting nursery is a big milestone for the whole family. We understand that this is a change for parents as well as for children. With some preparation and the right support, you can help make the transition a happy, positive experience for both you and your child.

Our Key Carer Philosophy

A secure and close relationship is important to everyone and must be maintained throughout childhood into adult life. In order to encourage this strong emotional wellbeing, the Berkshire Healthcare nurseries have a key carer philosophy which assigns a designated member of staff to each child and their family.



They will listen, observe, encourage and share significant events with them. The key carer approach focuses on enabling and supporting close attachments between individual children and individual nursery staff. This key carer will meet with you before starting nursery to gain professional knowledge regarding your child's interests, needs and areas for development.

A key carer is also there for parents and families, as well as children to support transitions and effective parent partnership.

Introducing the Idea of Nursery

We advise parents to begin talking about nursery naturally as part of your everyday conversations. Reading picture books about starting nursery can also help your child become familiar with the idea and understand what to expect. Talk positively about the things they might do, the people they may meet and the new experiences they'll enjoy. It is important to keep conversations about nursery relaxed, positive and age-appropriate, as placing too much emphasis on the transition may unintentionally make it feel more daunting for your child.

Settling-In Sessions

We offer a flexible, personalised settling-in period for every child joining our nurseries. You and your child will be invited for a series of short visits, allowing you both to get to know our team, the environment and daily routines. Our practitioners will talk with you about your child's interests, routines and any special requirements so we can provide the best possible support from their first visit.



Approximately 1 - 2 weeks before your child's start date, settling-in sessions will begin. A member of staff will contact you to arrange these sessions.

On the first visit, you will stay with your child and meet their key carer to discuss daily routines and answer any questions you may have, as well as to help your child feel safe and confident as they explore their new surroundings. Subsequent visits will involve your child being in the nursery for longer periods of time where they will gain more experience of nursery life. We'll work together to decide when your child is ready for longer sessions and, eventually, a full day.

We appreciate that you may be concerned when your child starts nursery as this is a significant life change for the family. We are happy for parents to telephone to gain feedback or reassurance.

Strategies to Support Your Child

There are many ways you can support your child with the initial transition period as they become familiar with the nursery and practitioners.

If your child is not used to spending time away from you, we recommend gently introducing short periods of separation before they begin nursery. This could be time spent with grandparents, a trusted family member or friend, or taking part in an activity without you. Gradually building up these experiences can help your child develop confidence and become familiar with the idea of being apart from you in a positive and reassuring way.

When bringing your child into the nursery, it is important to remain calm and reassuring. Children are often sensitive to their parents' emotions. While it is natural for you to feel unsure, it is important to remain calm and positive when saying goodbye. A confident

and reassuring approach can help your child feel safe and settled. We advise you to keep goodbyes fairly brief and consistent each time. Establishing a simple and familiar goodbye routine can help your child feel secure. Once you have said goodbye, it is important to leave calmly and confidently as prolonging the goodbye can sometimes make the separation more difficult.



Using familiar routines help to explain when you will return. Young children may not yet understand the concept of time. Instead, it is important to help them understand when you will be back by referring to familiar parts of their nursery routine, such as, “I’ll come back after your tea” or “I’ll see you at garden time.”

We want to help make nursery a positive experience for both children and families. When collecting your child, we recommend that you greet them warmly and reassure them that you are happy to see them while showing an interest in their day and celebrating their achievements. A positive reunion helps your child understand that although you may be apart during the day, you will always return.

Sleeping

We understand that every child has individual sleep needs. Information about a child's usual sleep routine, settling methods and sleep preferences will be discussed with you when your child starts at the nursery and will be reviewed as the child develops. We will work in partnership with you to provide consistency wherever possible while ensuring that all sleep arrangements comply with the EYFS and our safeguarding responsibilities.

If your child’s current sleep routine does not align with the routine at the nursery, it can be helpful to gradually adjust their bedtime and wake-up time in advance. Moving these by around 15 minutes every few days can make the transition easier and less disruptive than making a sudden change.



It is also important to help your child become comfortable settling to sleep without being rocked, as we are unable to rock children to sleep at nursery. Practising other calming sleep routines at home, such as cuddling, reading a story or using a familiar comforter, can help your child develop confidence in settling independently.

A well-rested child is more likely to feel settled and comfortable when experiencing new surroundings, routines and people.

We have a responsibility to ensure that every child in our care is provided with a safe, suitable and comfortable environment in which to sleep. Within our nurseries, children sleep in a cot or on a sleep mat, depending on their age. Our safer sleep arrangements are based on the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Statutory Framework, together with current Department for Education (DfE), NHS and safer-sleep guidance.

All babies and children under two years of age will always be placed on their backs to sleep. When a child is able to independently turn from their back to their front and from their front to their back, they may adopt their own sleeping position. Staff will continue to place the child on their back when initially settling them to sleep. All sleeping children will remain within the sight and hearing of staff and will be checked frequently throughout their sleep.

All children must arrive at the nursery awake and alert.

Eating

Mealtimes are great opportunities for children to learn, socialise and develop healthy habits. We provide a variety of nutritious meals and snacks throughout the day to keep children energised and ready to learn. All nursery meals are freshly prepared on site by our nursery chefs, following current guidance and feedback from dietitians. We cater for allergies, intolerances, and cultural preferences.

Breakfast is served between 7.30am and 8am.

Lunch is between 11.15am and 12.15pm.

Afternoon high tea from 3pm to 3.30pm.

A light snack is offered at 5.45pm.

In order to support your child's transition to our nursery meals, we advise you to ensure your child is familiar with the foods available on our menu, which is available to view on our website. It is also important for children to be familiar with the consistency of food provided that is suitable for their age, including lumps and chunks. Parents wishing to receive further information regarding weaning can access the 'Weaning – Start for Life' information on the NHS website, or contact the health visiting service or their GP.



As well as becoming familiar with different food consistencies, it is important that children learn and understand how we eat meals within the nursery. All mobile children are seated at a table while eating. Children who are not yet walking are seated safely in a highchair or appropriately secured chair.

For children's safety, children must remain seated while eating and are not permitted to walk around the room with food. This helps to reduce the risk of choking and ensures that mealtimes are safe and enjoyable for everyone.

Our Berkshire Healthcare nurseries are 'no nut' nurseries. We take care not to provide foods which contain nuts or nut products and are especially vigilant where we have a child or adult who has a known allergy to nuts.

Fresh drinking water is available to children throughout the day in each room. Children under three are provided with a beaker with a spout, while children aged three and four are encouraged to use an open-top cup. We recommend introducing your child to these types of cups at home before they start nursery if they are not already familiar with them. This can help them feel more comfortable and confident with their drinking routine when they join us.

If you are currently breastfeeding your child or your child takes bottle feeds, please speak to a member of the team who can give advice and guidance on how you and your child can be supported during the transition into nursery.

Nappy Changes and Toilet Training

Our nurseries ask you to supply nappies, wipes and barrier creams when you join the nursery. When this supply becomes low, we will ask you to replenish as appropriate.



Toilet training may begin from around two and a half years of age. As part of preparing for your child's transition into nursery if they are around this age, we ask that parents and carers support their child with becoming toilet trained where developmentally appropriate.

We understand that every child develops at their own pace and that toilet training is a gradual process. Children should be encouraged to use the toilet independently, including recognising when they need to go, managing their clothing and washing their hands afterwards. We appreciate that some children may still require occasional support or have accidents while they are settling into nursery. Our staff will provide appropriate encouragement and reassurance, working in partnership with parents and carers to support each child's individual needs and progress.

Communication

If your child does not yet speak English, or if English is not their first language, we encourage you to introduce a few familiar English words and phrases before your child starts nursery. This can help them become familiar with some of the language they will hear each day and support them to feel more comfortable and confident during the settling-in process.

We recommend practising simple everyday words and phrases such as “hello,” “goodbye,” “please,” “thank you,” “drink,” “eat,” “toilet,” “more,” “finished,” “stop,” and “sleep.” If it is developmentally appropriate, you can also introduce phrases such as “it’s time to tidy up,” “let’s wash our hands,” and “it’s time for lunch.”

We recognise and value the importance of children’s home languages and encourage families to continue speaking their first language at home. Introducing some familiar English alongside this can help children to begin understanding and communicating with practitioners and other children during their time at nursery. We also encourage you to share translations of key words and phrases in your child’s home language. This will help our practitioners understand and respond to your child’s needs, supporting their communication and helping them to feel safe, understood and settled in the nursery.

What Does a Typical Nursery Day Look Like?

Each playroom has routines to suit the age, stage, and interests of the children. This helps them feel secure while allowing for plenty of choice and discovery. Below are some of the key parts of our nursery day.

Welcome and free play

Children settle in and choose activities that interest them. This helps them build independence and confidence.

Snack

We offer healthy, balanced snacks each day to keep children energised and ready to learn and play.

Free play, focus activity, and garden

Focused time for group activities, stories, singing, and early learning experiences.

Lunch

Shared mealtimes encourage social skills, healthy habits, and conversation.

Sleep / rest and quiet time

Opportunities for naps or calm activities, especially for younger children.



Free play, focus activity, and garden

Daily access to secure gardens for physical activity, nature exploration, and fresh air.

Tea

Tea is served in the afternoon to keep children happy and smiling until home time.

Wind down and home time

We help children wind down and get ready for home by ensuring a calm and happy end to their nursery day. This involves more free play, a focus activity, and a light snack.

What to Provide

There are a number of essential items we ask parents and carers to provide to ensure your child is comfortable, prepared and able to fully participate in the nursery day. Please ensure all items are labelled clearly with your child's name.

- **Spare clothing:** Please provide at least two complete changes of clothes, including tops, bottoms, socks and underwear. Younger children, or children taking part in particularly messy activities, may require additional changes. We request all clothing to be labelled with your child's name.
- **Coat:** Please ensure your child brings a suitable named coat to nursery each day, appropriate for the weather and outdoor activities. As we provide opportunities for outdoor play throughout the year, children should be prepared to go outside in a range of weather conditions.
- **Nappies and wipes:** If your child wears nappies, please provide a full, clearly labelled supply of nappies, wipes and barrier cream where required. Practitioners will let you know when your child's supply is running low.
- **Shoes:** Children should wear labelled, comfortable and secure footwear that is suitable for nursery activities and outdoor play. Children in our youngest playroom do not wear shoes indoors, but a suitable pair must be provided for outdoor activities.
- **Medication:** If your child requires medication during their time at nursery, please provide this along with a completed and signed medication administration form. Please speak to a member of the nursery team for further information and guidance.



Seasonal Essentials

Summer: A named sun hat is required for the sunnier weather. If permission is granted, we are able to apply our nursery sun cream.

Winter: Please provide a warm, waterproof coat, as well as a hat, scarf and gloves. Wellington boots may also be provided.

Wet weather: On rainy days, please provide a waterproof jacket and spare socks. A puddle suit can also be useful for children who enjoy outdoor play in all weather conditions.

Please do not bring the following items into the nursery –

Toys: Please do not bring toys from home into nursery unless this has been requested by the team. Personal toys can become lost, damaged or misplaced, and we have a wide range of toys and resources available for children to enjoy throughout the day.

Food: Please do not bring food or snacks into nursery unless these have been specifically requested by the team. This helps us to keep all children safe, particularly those with allergies, intolerances or specific dietary requirements, and ensures that we follow our healthy eating policy.

Jewellery: Please do not allow your child to wear jewellery to nursery, including both real and pretend jewellery. Jewellery can present a safety risk during play and physical activities. We recognise that some children may wear jewellery for religious or cultural reasons, so please speak to a member of the nursery team if this applies to your child. We are happy to discuss appropriate arrangements to ensure your child's safety while respecting their religious or cultural needs.

If you have any questions regarding anything in this guide or would like further information, please speak to a member of the team.



Jack in the Box Day Nursery

Upton Hospital

Albert Street

Slough

SL1 2BJ

01189 044 636



Kiddies' Cabin Day Nursery

St Mark's Hospital

St Mark's Road

Maidenhead

SL6 6DU

01189 044 637



Little Dragon's Day Nursery

57-59 Bath Road

Reading

Berkshire

RG30 2BA

01189 044 638