



## “Rhythm of the Day”

### The Daily Nursery Routine

The structure and security of the daily rhythm of our nursery helps the children form a bridge between home and the busy world and builds foundations for confidence and a healthy life as the children grow and develop.

The nursery day is structured with a rhythm based on concentrated activity and free child-initiated play. By maintaining the rhythm, the children feel secure in the cycle of the days, weeks, and months, through repetition of seasonal activities, festivals, stories and songs.

The adults present in the nursery are there to help the children to feel safe within the rhythm, to inspire self-initiated learning and to act as collaborators and worthy role models in the learning process of the children. The Curiosity Approach inspired by Reggio Emilia Steiner Inspired rhythms and Pikler care approach encourages the adults to offer their knowledge and help to the children but together teachers and parents listen, observe, document and encourage children in whatever it is they are interested in doing.

The staff team at Ashdown Day are all committed to providing high quality child centred early years care and education with an emphasis on kindness, care and independence and planning at the moment.

**Beginnings:** We offer two options for starting the day at Ashdown Day, each designed to meet the needs of families today and to ensure the transition from home to Ashdown Day is gentle and calm.

Breakfast is available from 7.30am where cereal or porridge is provided for the children before they begin to enjoy play with their friends, there is time for stories too. At 8.30 the children leave the rookery building to go to their playrooms or garden and begin to be involved in one of the weekly activities. From 8.30-9.00 the practitioners welcome each child as they arrive until 9.00am and help them prepare for the morning.

**ITS VERY IMPORTANT THAT ALL CHILDREN HAVE ARRIVED BY 9.00AM**

**RING TIME** We make a circle in the morning and afternoon. Ring Time gives the children time to learn songs, poems and ring games. We experience our bodies, the seasons, the animals and the people that make up our world. The repeated Ring Time aids the children’s memory as they sing, act and move each day. It is a time not only to enjoy singing, but rhythm and co-operation.

The songs become favourites to be sung at nursery or home. We also enjoy singing songs in other languages, particularly those which may be spoken by staff and families within the nursery community.

**Snack time:** The children enjoy a healthy snack together around the table saying a verse to say “thank you”, we have a daily snack helper to help prepare the food and the fruits and vegetables are linked to our rhythm calendar by colour, the same food is served on the same days each week. The children participate in the setting of the table, serving and clearing away the snack. The children are made aware that the snack is ready by a gentle bell. Snack time is part of our daily rhythm both in the morning and afternoon.

**Creative Free play:** This is a time for the children to engage in productive, imaginative play without adult direction. This time is extremely important in a child’s development as this allows and strengthens independence, purpose, perseverance, social skills and creative expression that happens both inside and in the garden.

In the nursery room, playthings are carefully chosen and regularly cared for by adults and children. They are made from natural materials. We choose the toys carefully allowing the most room possible for imaginations to develop.

**Garden Play:** the children dig in the earth, play in the sandpit, explore the trees and mud kitchen, creative play, stories and can develop their motor skills.

The adults support and observe the children, whilst caring for the garden doing practical tasks such as sweeping the paths, planting and tending vegetables and mending equipment. This allows each child to relax and play or collaborate with the adults. We also go for walks together in the local area on our weekly nature walk and weekly movement walk. We venture out whatever the weather.

**ACTIVITY/PROVOCATIONS:** Children will join the adults in the daily activity, the activities are offered at various times throughout the day. The adult will work with the child’s capacity for learning through imitation and modelling and the activities are based on the children’s interests from the practitioner’s observations. Although we value the importance of rhythm and repetition a few times a term, there may be some flexibility with activity days, particularly around festivals and birthdays. This also allows children who come only two or three times a week to experience other activities.

**Music** - we sing songs and play musical instruments together; we use music as part of storytelling. Clare runs a Thursday music session with the children and the older children experience a weekly yoga session. We also listen to diverse types of music. Developing a sense of rhythm through daily action rhymes and songs helps the children with early literacy skills.

**Materials-** We use natural materials collected on our walks, clay and fabric, we use our crayons to draw pictures for ourselves and for one another, we explore assorted colours, paints and techniques. Here, the emphasis is on the exploration of colour rather than form or the end-product.

**Movement** - we grate, chop, squeeze and mix. We practice our fine and gross motor skills, and we prepare food to eat, birthday treats, festival foods and our nursery play dough.

**Magical** - Forest school is when we spend a magical morning in the forest fostering care and reverence for our environment. Allowing us to take care of our equipment, yurt, woodland, trees and learning about animals that share our environment, we gather wood and bracken for our fires.

**Making/Mending** - we make a range of seasonal crafts or continue with longer-term craft projects. Craft activities support the children’s initial hand-eye coordination and fine-motor skills. As the child grows, we gradually build on their learning, and include sewing techniques.

We take time to tidy up and put all the toys away in their correct places, using songs and a gentle bell. The baby dolls are put to bed and blankets and clothes returned to the correct baskets. Helping tidy is an integral part of our nursery day, allowing the children to become responsible and to care for their own space and toys. At each transition inside/outside, the children are encouraged to dress independently, and we leave our things tidily: fostering good habits by taking care of ourselves and our belongings.

**LUNCH At 12pm** we all sit down together to eat our healthy, nourishing lunch. We say our verse together, as a small moment of quiet in a busy day and busy lives. Reverence and gratitude are encouraged for the food that we eat. Practical maths is incorporated into these kinds of activities: counting, pouring, sharing, and measuring. It is also a social time, where we may listen to one another and join in conversations together.

**STORY:** We gather calmly in the story corner or decking area, to listen to a story told by the teacher, where the children listen and fill their imaginations. The story is repeated over several days, so the children grow to know and love the story. It is a gentle and quiet time Children have opportunities throughout the day to choose and share favourite books together and with an adult.

**AFTERNOON** After a busy morning in the nursery some children get ready to go home at 1.00pm, whilst others stay for the afternoon.

We start the afternoons with a peaceful rest to recharge ourselves, with time for relaxation and stories. At each transition inside/ outside, the children are encouraged to dress independently, and we leave our things tidily: fostering good habits by taking care of ourselves and our belongings. The rhythm of the afternoon is a little quieter as the children have had a busy morning, but the familiar repetition still gives the children the security they need. We play inside and outside, often venturing out into the community for a local walk to appreciate our beautiful environment.

Parents collect children from the garden or the rookery building during the afternoon depending on their individual circumstances.

## **Nursery Clothing**

Our day at nursery is a busy time of work and play, some of which is spent outside. The children wear a full set of waterproofs and boots. The children need this clothing all year round. Hats are worn all year round too, for warmth or sun protection. Sandals should not have open toes to protect the children's feet on walks and in the woods. Slippers are worn inside our nursery building and we prefer these not to have commercial logos, this applies to all clothing too. Please label your child's belongings.

## **Daily Rhythms**

Please be punctual when dropping off and collecting your child. Children who arrive late can find it difficult to settle. The children look forward to your greeting at the end of the day. Regular attendance is important to your child's experience and development.