

Welcome to the September edition of the Best Start bulletin. In this edition you will hear about Byron Children's Centre from Lara Burgess, find out how to update your computer skills, upcoming events and healthy eating advice.

Lara Burgess - Universal Services Co-ordinator (USC)

My name is Lara and I manage Byron Children's Centre. I have been here for 8 years now and have enjoyed watching so many families and children grow, develop and move onto reception. I recently took on the role of Universal Services Co-ordinator which has enabled me to transform the centre, so come and see what's changed!

What happens at Byron Children's Centre?

At Byron we facilitate midwife appointments and Baby café so we get to meet families in their early stages of parenthood. We also offer Healthy Child Clinics, Baby Club sessions and Baby Massage courses. When babies are weaned they can join in our Messy Mucky Mayhem, a sensory messy play session where all materials are edible. Babies love this session it engages their senses, curiosity and imagination. Don't worry we provide disposal aprons for the grown-ups and baby baths to wash them down afterwards.

For the wobbly walkers up to 5 years old we have Terrific

Toddlers, Messy Explorer's as well as a session for families of multiple births, all carefully planned to promote social skills, confidence, independence, communication and language as well as providing a safe and welcoming environment both inside and out. Children can explore and engage in role play, crafts and story time. We all enjoy running these sessions and having the opportunity to engage with the families, offer advice and support and to model different ways of interacting with children.

We are also a healthy start vitamin collection point so you can collect your vitamins from us! Visit www.healthystart.nhs.uk to check if you are eligible.

What activities have you organised at Byron over Summer?

Over the summer we have had pony rides, cuddled ducks, learnt circus skills, met a real crocodile and got stuck into Forest schools. These have been so popular and we will be adding more next year due to demand. It has been a fantastic summer!

What's new for September?

We are planning a 'Comfort Corner' session for anyone who just wants to talk and an 'Employability drop-in' session for tips and advice for anyone thinking about returning to work. We are also really excited about our 'Eco-week' starting on 17th September where we will be having fun with recycling, learning about the environment and making a wormery. We cannot wait to make some new wiggly friends and learn about their role in the environment.

What are your plans for Byron Childrens Centre?

We have a large secret outdoor area at the back of the centre full of logs, rustic climbing frames and a fire pit! This area is currently closed but I am planning to use it as a forest school zone for our little ones and their families. So watch this space!



Lara Burgess, USC (right) with Sally Allen, Early Years Practitioner (left)

Best Start Digital Zones - now open!



Have you ever wanted to set up your own business, create a website, update your CV, look for a job or learn some basic computer skills? Whatever your level, join us every Thursday from 10-2pm at Central Library where our small team will be happy to help:)

Tip of the month from Phunkyfoods!

Children who skip breakfast are more likely to eat junk food during the day and be overweight.

Eating food in the morning not only fuels us until lunchtime but actually gives our brains the essential energy to function and focus better on tasks throughout the day.



Overnight oats:

Combine oats with low-fat yoghurt and let it sit overnight in the fridge. In the morning just add seasonal fruit, such as berries and breakfast is served!

Look out for...



Launching on 1 October 2018

The new text messaging service is an easy way for parents and carers to confidentially ask for help about a range of issues such as sleep, breastfeeding, bottle feeding, immunisations, emotional health or to arrange an appointment.

Texts will be responded to by the Croydon Health Visiting team within one working day. The service will be available from Monday to Friday 9am – 5pm, excluding bank holidays. During out-of-hours, anyone who texts the service will receive an automated message with advice on where to get help if their question is urgent.

Further information will be available shortly.

Healthy start vitamin collection points

Don't forget to pick up your free vitamins from children's centres and health clinics. Visit www.croydon.gov.uk/beststart for timetables. To check if you qualify visit www.healthystart.nhs.uk

Check out our Facebook and Twitter pages for all up to date information.



Our upcoming Parenting Programmes

Mellow Parents

Ecclesbourne Children's Centre
Every Thursday from 6 Sept – 13 Dec
9.30am – 2.30pm

Selhurst Children's Centre
Every Mondays from 10 Sept – 17 Dec
9.30am – 2.30pm

Mellow Bumps

Woodside Children's Centre
Every Thursday from 27 Sept – 15 Nov
12.45pm - 2.45pm

To book email prh@croydon.gov.uk

Upcoming events for families



Mental Health Awareness

16 October, 11.00am-7.00pm @The Salvation Army, 66 High St, Thornton Heath CR7 8LF

Healthy Lifestyles

25 October 10am-3.00pm @ Central Croydon Library

Chatterbox sessions

From September, morning sessions will run from 9.30am-11.00am and afternoon sessions from 1pm - 2.30pm

The new timetable is available on www.croydon.gov.uk/beststart



Childcare in Croydon

All registered Croydon childcare is listed at www.familyspacecroydon.co.uk/

3 types of Early Years funding are available from the term following your child's birthday:

- 2year old funding is criteria based. Check if you qualify at www.familyspacecroydon.co.uk/
- Universal 3year old funding – available to all
- Extended 3 year old entitlement is criteria based. Eligibility is confirmed through a code from HMRC. All codes need to be received BEFORE the start of term (1 Sept/ 1 Jan/ 1 Apr). You can apply at www.childcarechoices.gov.uk/