

**UPMINSTER BAPTIST
CHURCH**

**SPRINGFIELD
PLAYGROUP**

PROSPECTUS

**Springfield Gardens
Upminster
Essex RM14 3EH
Tel: 01708 223653**

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1. ORGANISATION

As a church based playgroup we see our activity as a Christian service to the local community. A Management Committee meets at least every term with the Playgroup Leader to discuss all aspects of the Playgroup operation, including finance and future plans. This Committee consists of three members appointed by Upminster Baptist Church - the Chairperson, the Treasurer and one other member with a special interest in the welfare of children. The remaining two members are mothers who currently have a child at the playgroup, thus affording a close liaison with the Playgroup Leader, Mrs Ann Monks.

The Playgroup is covered by the Children Act 1989 and is inspected by Social Services and Ofsted. Accounts are audited annually by the church auditors.

2. AIMS

To foster social, spiritual and emotional growth in children, encouraging them to communicate with each other and with adults, to share and play together and to feel secure, respecting the needs of others as well as their own.

Our policy of child-directed play is implemented by providing a variety of activities from which the children can choose. This allows them to use their natural gifts of initiative and creativity in making their own discoveries. Staff integrate fully with the children, allowing them to initiate play. Children are given time to concentrate on an activity without always being adult-led.

Our aim is to provide a solid foundation on which to build children's future education by helping them to grow in self-confidence, learn to identify and resolve their own problems with intervention where necessary. The children will be allowed to develop at their own pace and treated as individuals.

3. ADMISSIONS

It is our intention to make our playgroup genuinely accessible to children and families from all sections of the local community. As a church-based playgroup we would give preference to a child whose family attends our church, and then places will be allocated on the basis of:

- a) Catchment area,**
- b) Siblings of those who already attend the playgroup,**
- c) Position on the waiting list,**
- d) Places available.**

4. FINANCE

All fees are to be paid a half-term in advance during the first two weeks of a half-term and are inclusive of sickness and holiday absence. All absences have to be paid for.

The Government is currently funding 3 and 4 year old children in Havering, however this is subject to change and is not guaranteed.

A deposit of £20 is required to secure a placement, two weeks from acceptance of place and will be refunded after the commencement of the Autumn term.

The advice of the Playgroup Leader may be sought in cases of financial hardship.

5. CONFIDENTIALITY

The playgroup's work with children and families will sometimes bring us into contact with confidential information. To ensure that all those using and working in the playgroup can do so with confidence, we have a commitment to respect and follow the guidelines laid down in our Confidentiality Policy.

6. STAFFING

When appointing staff we seek to appoint personnel who have the necessary skills and will uphold the ethos of the organisation. We believe a high adult to child ratio is essential in providing good quality care and we have at least one member of staff to each five children and more if there are younger children present. Our key worker system ensures each child and family has one particular staff member who takes a special interest in them.

Regular staff meetings provide opportunities for staff to undertake curriculum planning and to discuss the children's progress and any difficulties. Staff training meets all regulatory requirements. In addition we aim to ensure that at least half of our staff are qualified to the required level.

7. SETTLING-IN

We want children to feel safe and happy in the absence of their parents, to recognise other adults as a source of authority, help and friendship and be able to share with their parents afterwards the new learning experiences enjoyed in the playgroup. We also want parents to feel welcome and involved from the beginning.

We hold an introductory morning for children and parents to visit playgroup before term starts, to familiarise themselves with the surroundings. During this morning there will be exchange of information using our prospectus and an information sheet for parent helpers. If required, assistance will be given with the completion of forms regarding contact and medical details and permission for photography.

Families will be welcomed and supported in the playgroup for as long as it takes to settle their child here and parents will be assured of additional attention to settle their child. Parents will be encouraged, where appropriate, to separate from their children for brief periods at first, gradually building up to longer absences.

Children are welcomed each session with a smile and called by their name. We encourage children to bring into playgroup items relevant to the topic of the week, to create a link with home and help children and parents feel involved in playgroup.

Children are welcome to bring in a favourite toy or comforter when they first start playgroup, however we have found that this causes great distress to a child if it is left behind at the end of a session. Therefore, we suggest this practice is discouraged once the child has settled-in.

8. SESSION TIMES

We are open for 35 weeks per year, although Government funding is now available for 38 weeks. Parents and carers are welcome to use the funding for the extra weeks elsewhere.

The morning session will run from 9.10am - 11.40am

The afternoon session will run from 12.20pm - 2.50pm.

It would be appreciated if parents collecting their children from the morning session could be prompt, to allow sufficient time to prepare for the afternoon session.

9. ACTIVITIES FOR CHILDREN'S DEVELOPMENT

Activities are varied so that children can develop the necessary skills appropriate to their age and ability, the objective being to prepare the children for easy transition to school. There is a wide range of suitable play equipment available for the children to select freely. The programme is flexible, allowing for both quiet and more noisy play.

We begin the morning sitting together for registration time which includes a story, showing items brought in to link with the theme of the week, calling the register and looking at our behaviour goals, before our free choice activities. The ‘quiet room’ is available throughout the session for individual games and the book corner.

At break-time the children are encouraged to recognise their own name card and to exchange this for their snack. A choice of milk, water or orange juice is given, together with a biscuit and fruit. This is followed by organised games in the hall or garden (weather permitting), concluding with singing, talk-time, prayers and story time before going home.

Each week’s activities are linked to a theme and we work to curriculum plans to ensure we cover the Early Learning Goals as laid down by Ofsted.

These goals are:

Personal, Social and Emotional Development

Communication, Language and Literacy

Mathematical

Understanding and Knowledge of the World

Physical

Creative

Our weekly curriculum plan is displayed on the daily notice board and parents are welcome to view this.

10. PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS

Parents are the first educators of their young children. The aim of the playgroup is to support parents in their essential role and we will:

- **Involve parents in and give access to shared record keeping about their own child, offering short interviews to discuss their child's progress in line with the Early Learning Goals.**
- **Ensure parents are given regular information about their child's progress, giving an opportunity for discussion with staff.**
- **Ensure all parents have opportunities to contribute from their own skills, knowledge and interests, to the activities of the group and know that those contributions are welcome.**
- **Ensure that all parents are aware that our policies are available for examination on our playgroup notice board.**
- **Encourage two parents each year to take an active part in the regular playgroup Management Committee meetings.**
- **Send out regular newsletters to parents giving information on Early Learning Goals, future topics, inviting contributions and other items of interest.**
- **Ask parents to participate in providing fruit for snack time. They will be invited to sign a rota for the provision of fruit and supply it on their chosen week during the year.**

11. BEHAVIOUR

We believe that children and adults flourish best in an ordered environment in which everyone knows what is expected of them and children are free to develop their play and learning without fear of being hurt or hindered by anyone else. We aim to work towards a situation in which children can develop self-discipline and self-esteem in an atmosphere of mutual respect and encouragement.

All adults in our playgroup will try to provide a consistent, positive model for the children with regard to friendliness, care and courtesy and offer strategies for handling any conflict. They will praise and endorse desirable behaviour.

We have playgroup behaviour goals which suggest models of

sharing, listening to each other, walking quietly, tidying together, being friendly to everyone and not using feet and hands in inappropriate ways.

When children behave in unacceptable ways, they will be given one-to-one adult support in seeing what was wrong and how to cope more appropriately. If necessary this might be accompanied by a period of “time-out” with an adult. This is a cool-down period, lasting no more than 2-3 minutes, when a child will be sat away from others with an adult until it is thought a child is calm enough to return to the main group.

12. LEAVING AND COLLECTING CHILDREN

No child must be left unattended until admitted into the playgroup premises by a member of staff. If persons other than the main parent or carer is to collect the child, details must be recorded in the desk diary, signed and brought to the attention of playgroup staff. If during the session collection arrangements have to be altered, playgroup staff must be notified by telephone or letter.

All children should be collected promptly at either 11.40am for the morning session or 2.50pm for the afternoon session. If a child is not collected, staff will telephone the parent/carer. If this fails a member of staff will remain at the playgroup with the child for one and a half hours.

If the situation demands further action, Social Services will be contacted and their advice taken.

13. EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

We believe the group’s activities should be open to all children and families and to all adults committed to their education and care. All children will be respected and their individuality and potential recognised, valued and nurtured.

Activities and the use of play equipment offer children

opportunities to develop in an environment free from prejudice and discrimination. The materials selected will help children to develop their self-respect and to respect others by avoiding stereotypes and using positive images and words.

Management of resources within the playgroup will ensure that both girls and boys have full access to all kinds of activities and equipment and are equally encouraged to enjoy and learn from them.

Resources will be chosen to give children a balanced view of the world and an appreciation of the rich diversity of our multi-cultural society.

Appropriate opportunities will be given to children to explore, acknowledge and value similarities and differences between themselves and others.

14. SAFETY

The safety of children is of paramount importance and our safety policy is strictly adhered to. The playgroup premises are regularly inspected by Social Services and the Fire Service.

We follow guidelines laid down by the Government in the 1989 Children's Act and the Health & Safety Legislation which have regard to the environment, premises, equipment and the supervision of children.

Children regularly take part in fire drills and all staff are aware of evacuation procedures.

A fully stocked first aid box is available at all times and staff are first aid trained.

Details of accidents are recorded in the Accident Book, bearing the signature of a member of staff and the child's parent is asked to sign on hearing the circumstances of the accident. Incidents

are recorded in the Incident Book.

We have a Policy for Emergencies, which can be found on our notice board.

15. HEALTH AND HYGIENE

Our playgroup promotes a healthy lifestyle and a high standard of hygiene in its day to day work with children and adults.

The playgroup will observe current legislation regarding food hygiene, registration and training and when serving snacks or cooking with children in activities, will provide healthy, wholesome food, promoting the children's understanding of a healthy diet.

To prevent the spread of any infections, adults in the playgroup will ensure that children's hands are washed after using the toilet and before handling food and that they are encouraged to blow their noses when necessary and dispose of tissues hygienically.

Parents are asked to keep their children at home if they have any infection and to inform the playgroup of the nature of the infection. Parents are asked not to bring into playgroup any child who has been vomiting or had diarrhoea until at least 24 hours has elapsed since the last attack.

Cuts or open sores must be covered with sticking plaster or other dressing.

If a child is on prescribed medicine, written information will be obtained from the parent, giving clear instructions about dosage and administration of medication and permission for a member of staff to follow the instructions.

16. SPECIAL NEEDS

Our playgroup aims to have regard to the DfEE Code of Practice

on Special Educational Needs and also to the guidelines supplied to private and voluntary providers of pre-school education. We will provide a welcome to all children and appropriate learning opportunities.

All children in the group, irrespective of their special needs, are encouraged wherever possible and appropriate, to participate in all the group's activities.

Our Special Educational Needs Co-ordinators (SENCO's) are Chris Barnes and Jackie Butler and they are responsible for providing support for children who have additional needs in the group by:

- Providing information about additional support available locally,**
- Liaison with other professionals who may be involved with the child,**
- Gathering information and using it to plan for the child's individual needs.**

17. CHILD PROTECTION

We comply with the procedures approved by the Area Child Protection Committee. We intend to create in our playgroup an environment in which children are safe from abuse and in which any suspicion of abuse is promptly and appropriately responded to.

If a member of staff is concerned about possible child abuse, the Playgroup Leader is advised so that she can assess the situation. After consultation, if appropriate, further advice will be sought from the Social Services Child Protection Team. All staff are aware of the London Borough of Havering procedures and appropriate responses.

18. LOST CHILD

We aim to provide a safe and secure environment. However, in the event of a child becoming lost while on playgroup premises, designated members of staff will ring the police and emergency services advising them of:

The urgency of the situation, name, age, description and disposition of the child and any other relevant information.

Following the call to the police/emergency services a call will then be made to the parent/carer, Ofsted and Child Information Services. Whilst these calls are being made the following procedures will begin:

- a) Selected members of staff on duty will immediately make a thorough search of the premises and immediate area,**
- b) Seek assistance from playgroup staff not on duty,**
- c) Ensure the safety of the children still on the premises.**

19. COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

Many concerns can be resolved quickly by an informal approach to the appropriate member of staff. If a concern is raised regarding the playgroup by a parent or carer, they should first talk over their worries and anxieties with the Playgroup Leader. Complaints will be investigated and the playgroup will take appropriate and prompt action. The full Complaints Procedure Policy can be found on our notice board.

20. STUDENT PLACEMENTS

We recognise that the quality and variety of work which goes on in the playgroup makes it an ideal place for students on placements from early years training, as well as those on the Diploma in Pre-school Practice or tutor field worker courses. In co-operation with educational providers, we welcome only those students engaged in bona fide early years training. As the needs of the children are paramount, students will not be permitted in large numbers and will not have unrestricted access to the children unless registered as fit persons. Any information gained about the children will remain confidential.

21. CAR PARK

We would like to advise that if the car park of Upminster Baptist Church is used, this does not belong to playgroup and we can therefore take no responsibility for acts of vandalism, theft or accidents which may occur and cars are parked there at the owner's own risk.

If using the car park, we would ask you to please observe due care and attention to other users.

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This prospectus is intended to provide information about the service we offer and cannot be as detailed as we would prefer due to space limitations. The playgroup holds full and extensive policies on the above topics and parents and carers are welcome to read these policies as required.