

# newsletter

Harpenden Children's Centres – Christmas 2011

**A Sure Start Children's Centre**



## Season's greetings to all of our families & partners both old and new

Its five years since I was appointed to develop and manage Harpenden Children's Centre. From a one man band, the centre now has a vibrant and dedicated team of staff and volunteers operating out of two centres. Our range of services have reached thousands of children. Some of our early attendees are now nine years old and we have since had their first second and in some cases third siblings coming along to our centres. If any of you were early users we love to hear how your children are doing, and in particular how any of our services have helped them.

As we move into a new year we are redeveloping some of our services in response to both local need and government expectations. In this newsletter are details of new groups and changes to some existing services. We are very excited to be working in partnership with the NCT to provide breastfeeding support and hope you will spread the word to any new mums. Likewise please shout out the news that we have an extended and improved toy library. We are hoping that by staying open for longer more families will be able to use the service and stay and play for a while.

Finally I would like to extend a big thank you to the parents and partners who have kindly made donations to the centre. Your generosity enables us to give our most vulnerable children a head start. We couldn't do it all without you.

**Pat Everett - Harpenden Children's Centre Manager**



### Helping families to:

- Be Healthy
- Stay Safe
- Enjoy & achieve
- Make a positive contribution
- Achieve economic well-being



[www.hertschildrenscentres.org.uk/harpenden](http://www.hertschildrenscentres.org.uk/harpenden)

# Little Larks

Little Larks is a joint venture between the Children's Centre and Skylarks Daycare. This new group is specifically aimed at children who for a variety of reasons would benefit from an earlier start in accessing high quality play and learning opportunities. The sixteen place group will be open every morning during term time. Parents can be confident in leaving their children in the very safe and experienced hands of an outstanding, fully qualified team. Led by Jo Hobbs our Early Years Professional, the staff will work on a ratio of one member of staff to every four children ensuring that every child can learn and achieve in their own unique way.

There are strict criteria for accessing places, with those children meeting the highest criteria receiving free places through government funding. In exceptional circumstances the children's centre will sponsor places where children fall just below the required criteria level. More information on eligibility can be found at

<http://www.hertsdirect.org/services/healthsoc/childfam/csupportservices/settingupchildcare/flexyears/twoyold/>.

## Sparrows

Sparrows is a new group that offers support and high quality play opportunities where parents/carers and children can spend time together in a safe, calm, and supportive environment. This invitation only group operates on Tuesday afternoons between 1.15 and 2.45pm.



## Toy Library

We are now closed for lending until the new year. As a result of the exciting new changes within the Batford Early Years Centre the Toy Library will be moving to Fridays. From 20<sup>th</sup> January 2012 we will be extending our opening hours, opening from 12:30pm until 3:30pm.

As a Toy Library member, in addition to accessing our wide range of toys you can also borrow some of our fantastic new Story Boxes which are full of traditional and contemporary story books and activities that you can enjoy with your child.

If you're not a member yet you can join any time of year, just come to one of our sessions on a Friday. Annual subscriptions are still only £6 and each toy is 40p per fortnight. (Terms and conditions apply).

# Breastfeeding support at the Children's Centre from January 2012

Harpenden Children's Centre is to host, in partnership with Harpenden NCT, a Baby Café Local, which is a breastfeeding drop-in offering free support to breastfeeding mothers. The Baby Café Local will be run by an NCT Breastfeeding Counsellor, along with peer supporters.

The peer supporters are all local mums who have breastfed their own children and who have been specially trained to listen to women's questions or concerns about breastfeeding, as well as provide them with sources of information according to their needs. Three quarters of British mothers who stopped breastfeeding in the first six months (and 90% of those who stopped in the first two weeks) would have liked to have continued for longer.

We hope this service will help support mothers and enable them to feed for as long as they choose. The Baby Café Local will be open each Thursday from 10am until 11.30 starting 19 January 2012. All breastfeeding mothers, pregnant women, babies and older siblings are welcome... the group will be a great social opportunity too!

## Harpenden NCT – *thank you for voting*

In our last newsletter we asked you to vote for Harpenden & District NCT applied for £6k of grant funding from Natwest. We are pleased to let you know that they were successful and the funds are being used to set up and run the Baby Café Local.



## Best Toy list 2011

*This year's Message from Santa: Remember that what children learn from you is more powerful and enduring than any school lessons.*

*It's Childs Play - you don't need to spend a fortune to provide your children with memorable experiences*

- **You and your time** - even five minutes uninterrupted time playing together each day let's children know they are valued.
- **Your soothing touch** - For any child of any age a cuddle, soothing touch supports positive brain development
- **Your voice** - a song sung together is a gift that lasts a life time. Talk together, verbal communication builds brain patterns for life-long language development.
- **An outside space to explore** - garden, a park or simply a relaxing walk. Learning to relax is key to developing coping strategies for later life.
- **Other children** - Being part of a community / sharing time with family and friends enables children to develop a sense of belonging and resilience.

# Weekly events taking place at Harpenden Children's Centre

## from January 2012

Day	Session	Venue	Information	Time
Mon	Opportunity Class	Batford Centre	Supporting young children with significant delay or learning difficulties Referrals only.	1-3pm
Tues	Health Visitor one to one	Batford Centre	By appointment with the HV	10-12pm
	Postnatal Group	Batford Centre	A series of information sessions with a different topic each week, usually led by a Health Visitor or Doctor.	Call/see website for the programme
	Sparrows	Batford Centre	Toddler group offering support & high quality play opportunities - invitation only.	1.15-2.45pm
Wed	Opportunity Class	Batford Centre	As above	1-3pm
	NCT winter playgroup	Batford Centre	Contact <a href="mailto:toddlers@harpenden-nct.org.uk">toddlers@harpenden-nct.org.uk</a> to register to attend / find out more.	Alternate weeks
Thurs	Baby Local Café	Batford Centre	In partnership with NCT, drop-in offering support to breastfeeding mothers.	10am-11.30am
	Opportunity Class	Batford Centre	As above	Every 2 weeks 1pm-3pm
	Outreach Surgery	Southdown Centre	30 min appointments to discuss or obtain support from an Outreach Worker	Afternoon
Fri	Drop-in for parents & babies	Batford Centre	Meet other parents over a coffee and chat to a health visitor if you have any queries.	10am-12pm
	Toy Library	Batford Centre	An opportunity for your child to try out new toys. Registration fee & hire costs apply.	12.30-3.30pm
	C-card drop-in	Southdown Centre	Free condom & sexual health service for the under 25's.	Coming soon
Sat	Czech & Slovak Playgroup	Batford Centre	Meets every two weeks. Call Hanka or Karolina for more details on 07951 165 815.	2.30-4pm

**Harpenden Children's Centre** c/o Batford Nursery School, Holcroft Rd, Harpenden, Herts, AL5 5BQ T: 01582 714 210 E: [admin.harpenden@hertschildrenscentres.org.uk](mailto:admin.harpenden@hertschildrenscentres.org.uk)  
[www.hertschildrenscentres.org.uk/harpenden](http://www.hertschildrenscentres.org.uk/harpenden)