



Helping At Ide Hill Pre-school- A Guide For Parents

One of the things which makes Ide Hill Pre-school so special is the number of adults involved. By coming to help in pre-school, you are giving your child a chance to be part of a parent-involving pre-school. Research shows that children learn better when their parents/carers are involved*. It is an important step towards giving all the children in the group the best possible start.

Ide Hill Pre-School needs you

Having mums, dads or carers helping at pre-school gives the children a number of advantages:

- Seeing their own parents involved in the pre-school shows children that their parents are interested and think education is important — and that they have a part to play in it. It makes your child feel special because you are there.
- Children in pre-school encounter a wide range of adults, each with their own different skills and backgrounds.
- It helps us to maintain a high adult:child ratio (though parent helpers aren't counted in the official ratio), enabling us to provide individual care and attention to each child's needs and development.
- Parents who help in the group get to know what goes on and are in the best position to pick up on pre-school learning at home.
- Watching their own child busy among the pre-school activities and getting on with other children can give parents new insight into children's needs and abilities.

Ide Hill Pre-School has a rota of parent helpers - please take a turn on it if you possibly can. Fathers, mothers, grandparents and other carers are all welcome. If you are not sure about anything when you come in to help, please feel free to ask myself or your child's key person. They are there to help you.



The following tips will help you make the most of your time in pre-school:

Playing with the children

- You are not expected to tell the children what to do. Just join them at an activity, watch what they are doing and be prepared to talk to them about it
- An adult is always welcome in the book corner — to read a book with one or two children, to talk about the pictures, or to tell a story.
- At the computer station you can help younger children with learning how to use the mouse and keyboard control and with educational computer programs, older children can be encouraged to learn how to start up and use educational programs.
- When one child or a group of children have finished with an activity, find time if you can to tidy the equipment so that it is ready for use again. Encourage the children to help you.
- Some children will be glad of practical help — with putting on and taking off aprons, for example, or writing their names on their work using lower case letters.
- Some children will welcome you in their role play, they may want to “wash and style” your hair in the hairdressers, serve you tea in the café, or help with building work!
- You may have a skill you can share or talk about with the children, e.g. playing a musical instrument, drawing, sewing, nursing, dancing, story-telling.

Helping with the chores

Any help with chores is appreciated by staff as it frees them up so they can work with the children. The kind of chores that may be involved are:

- Helping to prepare snack
- Washing up after snack time
- Tidying up in kitchen
- Helping staff and children tidy up towards end of session
- Helping staff wipe tables, empty bins, mop up spillages



If you prefer not to help with the chores and would like to just be involved with the children then that's fine. If you would prefer not to get involved with the children and feel that you would rather help on the chores side of things - then that's fine as well - we can find lots of jobs for you to do. Just let me know at the beginning of the session.

The first time you help in the group, your own child might find it hard to see you in this unfamiliar situation and to share you with a lot of other children. Don't be afraid to give extra cuddles and attention to your own child if he or she seems to need it.

Make the most of your time in pre-school

This is a day when you leave your other jobs behind for a while. It gives you a chance to try your hand at something new and to observe your own child in a new situation. You might find you enjoy learning something different about young children's play and about how pre-schools provide for it.

It also gives you the chance to get to know the staff better. There may be an opportunity to chat with your child's key person, ask any questions you may have, or get ideas for playing with your child at home.

What to do about helping

If you would like to help then just sign your name on the parent rota situated on the notice board on the days that you are available to help. You can help as little or as often as you like but if your child has only recently started we suggest waiting until they are more settled in before you sign up on the rota.

Would you like to help in other ways? There are other ways you can help at pre-school. Would you like to be involved in making decisions about the pre-school, or in the fundraising? Then join the committee. You may be concerned about the commitment and responsibilities of becoming a committee member. However, the benefits are two-way; and the skills and knowledge you gain are always useful in other roles and a valuable addition to a CV.

*"Evidence has clearly shown parents' involvement in their children's early learning has a huge and lasting impact" Katherine Rake - Chief Executive, family and Parenting Institute - interviewed by 'Under 5' Magazine of the Pre-School Learning Alliance January 2010