

## **Toddlers 2026**

The Toddler Group has continued to meet every Thursday in term-time with an average of 15 families coming along each week to enjoy fun, games and friendship.

We have a core team of weekly helpers, Sue Mulligan, Debbie Ledsam, May Muhr, Lindsey Betteridge and myself.

We are also hugely grateful to all those on the rota who come along and serve refreshments, Sue Coe, Frances Wilby, Jane Chaplin, Laura Ramsey, Lesley Self and Doreen Spielman. Doreen has now stepped back from helping, but thank you all.

On a Thursday morning the centre is a hive of activity with the under 5s taking full advantage of our stock of toys whilst mostly grandparents and carers catch up with each other. We start each week with general play and an open hatch for everyone to have access to refreshments. Popular toys are the kitchen and toy food, the railway, and the slide - learning to take turns is very important!

In the Summer, we enjoy being outside in the garden, we spread out the noise, and the children! There is less danger of the bigger children running into the smaller ones on the ride on toys! The children and adults enjoy using the art room, it limits the glue, glitter and paint to one place, and makes it easier to clean up. We have made Christmas angels, cards for mother's day and valentine's day, crowns, and the ever-popular play dough.

At 11am we play the tidy up song and encourage the children to put away their toys. The wiggle song is next where we burn off excess energy before we sit down quietly to listen to a story, celebrate birthdays and choose songs by selecting a toy from the special bag. We end with the teddy bear song, waving goodbye.

We have celebrated with our families as we acknowledge various life events including, several new babies, who in turn will keep the toddler group going!

Our last meeting each term involves a party with special food and games. Just before Christmas we are visited by Santa Claus (thanks Bill!) and hear the Christmas story, (thanks Alan) or Easter we enjoy an Easter egg hunt and hear the Easter story (thanks Lindsey) and we end the summer term with fun and games in the garden, weather permitting.

The Group ran the pre-Christmas coffee morning with families donating Christmas goods for raffle prizes, and again we raised money for Great Ormond Street Hospital.

It is always sad when we have to say goodbye to families, particularly those who have been with us for a long time. This year we had one such goodbye to the Spielman family; sisters Zoe and Laura came with their children and Zoe continued to come as a childminder, so she deserves a long achievement medal, as we think she has been coming for over 10 years!

**Judy Sharman**