



"Rhythm of the Day"

The Daily Nursery Routine

The structure and security of the daily rhythm of our nursery helps the children form a bridge between home and the busy world and builds foundations for confidence and a healthy life as the children grow and develop.

The nursery day is structured with a rhythm based on concentrated activity and free child initiated play. By maintaining the rhythm the children feel secure in the cycle of the days, weeks and months, through repetition of seasonal activities, festivals, stories and songs.

The adults present in the nursery are there to help the children to feel safe within the rhythm, to inspire self-motivated learning and to act as collaborators and worthy role models in the learning process of the children. The Reggio Emilia approach encourages the adults to offer their knowledge and help to the children but most of all, teachers and parents listen, observe, document and encourage children in whatever it is they are interested in doing.

The staff team at Ashdown Day are all committed to providing high quality child centred early years care and education with an emphasis on kindness and care.

Beginnings: We offer two options for starting the day at Ashdown Day, each designed to meet the needs of families today and to ensure the transition from home to Ashdown Day is gentle and calm.

Breakfast is available from 8.00am where cereal or porridge is provided for the children before they begin to enjoy play with the morning toys. There is time for stories too until 8.30 when the other children start to arrive. From 8.30-9.30 the practitioners welcome each child and help them prepare for the morning. The children can choose between joining the daily activity or continue their most important work playing!

ITS VERY IMPORTANT THAT ALL CHILDREN HAVE ARRIVED BY 9.30AM

Creative Free play: This is a time for the children to engage in productive, imaginative play without adult direction. This time is extremely important in a child's development as this allows and strengthens independence, purpose, perseverance, social skills and creative expression. The children can start their day either indoors or outdoors

In the nursery room, playthings are carefully chosen and regularly cared for by adults and children. They are made from natural materials we choose the toys carefully allowing the most room possible for imaginations to develop.

In the garden the children dig in the earth, play in the sandpit, explore the trees and mud kitchen.

Tend the garden. The adults support and observe the children, whilst caring for the garden doing practical tasks such as sweeping the paths, planting and tending vegetables and mending equipment. This allows each child to relax and play or work alongside the adults. We also go for walks together in the local area. We venture out whatever the weather.

Snack time: At around 10.00am we have a daily snack helper to help prepare the wholesome snack and the fruits and vegetables are linked to our rhythm calendar by colour. The days of the week have a colour to help develop the children's sense of passing of time. Children are made aware that snack is ready by a gentle bell and they choose a natural break during their creative free play.

ACTIVITY/PROVOCATIONS: Whilst some children continue to play, others will join the adults in the morning's activity. This is adult-led. The adults doing the activity will work with the child's capacity for learning through imitation and modelling and the activities are based on the children's interests from the practitioner's observations.

We call each day by its activity name, which the children know and love, as the name of the day has real context and meaning for them. Although we value the importance of rhythm and repetition, a few times a term, there may be some flexibility with activity days, particularly around festivals and birthdays. This also allows children who come only two or three times a week to experience other activities.

Music Day- we sing songs and play musical instruments together, we use music as part of story telling. Andrea teaches a yoga session every other Monday with the children. We listen to different types of music. Developing a sense of rhythm through action rhymes helps the children with early literacy skills.

Materials day- we use our crayons to draw pictures for ourselves and for one another, we explore different colours, paints and techniques. Here, the emphasis is on the exploration of colour rather than form or the end-product

Movement day - we grate, chop, squeeze and mix. Ben runs a movement session with the children sometimes at the recreation ground, we practice our motor skills and we prepare food to eat, birthday treats, festival foods and our nursery play dough.

Mending Day-Forest school is today we spend a magical morning in the forest fostering care and reverence for our environment. Allowing us to take care of our equipment and help to keep it in good order, including the garden and our plants.

Making Day- we make a range of seasonal crafts or continue with longer-term craft projects. Craft activities support the children initial hand-eye co-ordination and fine-motor skills. As the child grows, we gradually build on their learning, and include sewing techniques.

TIDY UP At around 10.45am we give the children some warning that it is nearly to time to tidy away, so not to wrench them unsuspecting from their busy imaginary worlds. We take time to tidy up and put all the toys away in their correct places. Helping tidy is an integral part of our nursery day, allowing the children to become responsible and to care for their own space and toys.

RING TIME We then make a circle, to have Ring Time Through songs, poems and ring games, we experience our bodies, the seasons, the animals and the people that make up our world. The repeated Ring Time aids the children's memory as they sing, act and move each day. It is a time not only to enjoy singing, but rhythm and co-operation.

The songs become favourites to be sung at nursery or home. We enjoy also singing songs in other languages, particularly those which may be spoken by staff and families within the nursery community.

LUNCH At 12pm we all sit down together to eat our healthy, nourishing lunch. A candle is lit and we say our 'Hands together, hands apart' verse, as a small moment of quiet in a busy day and busy lives. Reverence and gratitude are encouraged in the knowledge that these qualities will later turn into a social responsibility born of respect for the world. Practical maths is incorporated

into these kinds of activities: counting, pouring, sharing, and measuring. It is also a social time, where we may listen to one another's "News".

PLAY Once more the children may play during a period of free play either inside or outside. At each transition inside/ outside, the children are encouraged to dress independently and we leave our things tidily: fostering good habits by taking care of ourselves and our belongings.

STORY We clean up from our busy, often messy times in the garden! We gather calmly in the story corner or decking area, to listen to a story told by the teacher, where the children listen and fill their imaginations. The story is repeated over several days so the children grow to know and love the story. It is a gentle and quiet time

AFTERNOON After a busy morning in the nursery some children get ready to go home at 1.00pm, whilst others stay for the afternoon.

We start the afternoons with a peaceful rest to recharge ourselves, with time for relaxation, stories. The rhythm of the afternoon is a little quieter as the children have had a busy morning but the familiar repetition still gives the children the security they need. We have a wholesome snack which the children help prepare and we play inside and outside often venturing out into the community for a local walk to appreciate our beautiful environment.

Parents collect children from 4pm, depending on their individual circumstances.