

Acorns Early Years Centre



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ACORNS EARLY YEARS CENTRE
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INTRODUCTION

Acorns Early Years Centre is a Private Company Limited by guarantee with charitable status. It is a self-funded, non-profit making organisation with all fees being ploughed back to pay for salaries, equipment, maintenance and services. We are open 51 weeks in the year, closing only for five days at Christmas and all Bank Holidays.

As a parent you will be concerned about the sort of care your child will receive while at Acorns Early Years Centre. This brochure gives you an outline of the children's activities and the philosophy that lies behind them. We hope that it reassures you that your child will be given every opportunity to grow and develop in a secure, friendly and stimulating environment.

At Acorns we believe every child deserves the best possible start in life and support to reach their potential. We understand a child's experience in the early years has a major impact in their future life chances. We recognize that all children should be able to play and learn in a fun environment with adults who understand and care about them.

In our latest nursery Ofsted Inspection in September 2021, we were delighted to be graded 'good' overall.

We are part of the Leading Early Years Team in Kent and the Manager has been identified as a Leading Early Years Practitioner. We share our good practice with other settings in Dartford to help raise standards of care and education for all children in Kent.

MISSION STATEMENT.

To provide access within our community to a safe, secure and stimulating environment for all children up to the age of 5 years on a full time basis and to enhance and develop the provision for out of school care to children up to the age of 11 years.

"Staff Support Children to develop good Communication Skills" Ofsted 2018

ORGANISATION.

At Acorns we have four separate rooms:

Our **Chestnuts room** provides care and education for babies from 4 months to 2 years of age. Four members of staff care for up to 10 babies in a warm, safe, stimulating environment with plenty of opportunities for one to one care. We follow each baby's home routine and work very closely with parents/carers.

Our **Little Conkers room** provides care and education for children from 2 years to 3 years of age. Four members of staff work with up to 16 toddlers in a bright, stimulating, busy room where they learn to socialize and play together.

Our **Young Oaks room** provides care and education for children from 3 years to school age. Four members of staff work with 24 children in an environment that fosters their growing independence and helps prepare them for school.

Children move automatically through these first three rooms.

Our **Fully Funded Young Oaks room** provides care and education for children from the term after their 3rd Birthday from 9 am - 12pm Term Time Only (38 weeks/570 hours per year). Like our pre-school room this room fosters their growing independence and helps prepare them for school.

Our **out of school** room provides a stimulating and fun environment for children aged 4 years to 11 years of age. **This room has a separate registration process and children do not automatically move from the pre-school room to this room.** Please ask for our out of school brochure if you will wish to use this service. As we have long waiting lists it is advisable to do this as soon as possible.

We also have a separate kitchen, resource room, office, staff room and toilets.

Key Person

Each child/family has an assigned key person. This is a named member of staff who helps your child become familiar in the setting and to feel safe and confident within it. The key person will develop a genuine bond with the child and their parents/carers and offer a settled, close relationship. They will feedback regularly re the child's well being and progress in the setting.

Staff

We offer high quality care and education at Acorns and ensure our staff are trained to the highest standards possible. All permanent staff have achieved or are working towards a Level 3 Child Care qualification and all staff undertake regular professional development training.

The Manager of Acorns is Courtney Woolmer. The Deputy Manager is Julia McEwan

"Staff are positive role models and have high expectations for children's behaviour." Ofsted 2021

Atmosphere

The Centre reflects a calm, friendly, home-like atmosphere, which cultivates a sense of security in the children. Each day there is a quiet time for children to rest, sleep or relax.

Children are treated with respect. Staff take care not to raise their voices above normal conversation level when speaking to children.

Children are encouraged to try new activities at their own pace and emphasis is on a willingness to 'have a go'. Staff are positive about every child's achievement, whatever this might be.

"children show kindness and consideration for each other as they happily share and take turns" Ofsted 2021

Partnership with Parents

The Early Years staff work in close partnership with parents and understand that close working between early years practitioners and parents is vital for the identification of children's learning needs and to ensure a quick response to any area of particular difficulty. We recognize that parents and carers are central to a child's wellbeing and that they are the most important people in children's lives. We ensure parents/carers are kept informed of their children's progress and of any problems informally on a daily basis and more formally once a year on Open Evenings. Each child has a Learning Journey developmental record and parents are positively encouraged to contribute to these.

We have an 'open door' policy and parents are welcomed at all times.

Staff are always willing to arrange a private meeting with parents/carers if there are any personal matters they wish to discuss. The Managers are always readily available for parent's questions and concerns.

Parents are encouraged to participate in the activities of the Centre. We organize social and fund-raising events throughout the year, e.g. Barbecue and Quiz Nights, where staff, parents and families can meet together. Parents are encouraged to join the Social committee, details on request. We also welcome parents and extended family to join us in the nursery for celebrations and festivals, and to share knowledge/experiences with the children. Recent occasions where parents/carers have joined us include sharing in Divali and Vaisakhi festivals, a parent who is a dental surgeon talking to the children about caring for their teeth and parents and grandparents joining us on our Toddle Waddle to the local park.

"Parents say that they feel informed about their children's progress and receive daily updates" Ofsted 2021

Inclusion and Equalities.

Acorns Early Years Centre provides for equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice and ensures that each child is included and not disadvantaged because of ethnicity, culture or religion, home language, family background, learning difficulties or disabilities, gender, age or ability.

We recognise every child is unique and are committed to help every child to be resilient, capable, confident and assured. We understand that inclusion is about attitudes as well as behaviour and practices.

We are aware of our responsibility to ensure positive attitudes towards diversity and difference and to make sure that every child is not only included, but that they also learn from the earliest age to value diversity in others and grow up to make a positive contribution to society. We do this by removing or helping to overcome barriers for children that already exist, being alert to the early signs of needs that could lead to later difficulties and by stretching and challenging all children.

Our full policy will be made available to you once your child starts at the setting.

Funding

Every child is entitled to 15 hours per week of term time only free education from the term after their 3rd birthday. If your child does not access one of our fully funded spaces fees will be calculated each term with the funded hours deducted.

15 additional funded hours are also available for eligible parents.

More details on funding as well as tax free childcare can be found on the childcare choices website www.childcarechoices.co.uk

CHILDREN'S LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) sets the standards for Learning, Development and Care for children from birth to the end of their reception school year. The EYFS was introduced by the government in September 2008 and is now the statutory framework used at Acorns and all early years settings/child minders.

The overarching aim of the EYFS is to help the children achieve the five Every Child Matters outcomes of staying safe, being healthy, enjoying and achieving, making a positive contribution, and achieving economic well-being.

Play is vital for children and underpins the delivery of the EYFS.

At Acorns we plan a safe, rich and stimulating play based environment for all of our children, both indoors and outdoors. Staff observe the children regularly and plan for the next step in their development. Children are supported to make progress at their own pace and are challenged but never pressured.

The principles of The Early Years Foundation Stage which guide the work of all early years practitioners are grouped into four themes:

A Unique Child
Positive relationships
Enabling Environments
Learning and Development.

Learning and Development is broken down into six areas of learning :

Personal, Social and Emotional Development
Communication, Language and Literacy
Problem-Solving, Reasoning and Numeracy
Knowledge and Understanding of the World
Physical Development
Creative Development

None of these areas of Learning and Development can be delivered in isolation from the others. They are all equally important and depend on each other to support a rounded approach to child development. We deliver all the areas through planned, purposeful play, with a balance of adult led and child initiated activities.

More details of our how we support your child's learning and development will be made available when your child starts at Acorns.

Settling In

We offer a gradual settling in process, and our main concern is the happiness of your child. The settling in process is tailored to each individual family, and will be discussed with you prior to your child starting.

We always offer a pre-start visit where you will meet your key person and complete a care plan.

Observations and Assessment

Acorns Uses Iconnect Software system to regularly update parents on children's days, sleep eating as well as fun activities and development.

Healthy Eating Policy

We consider snack and meal times to be an important part of the children's session/day. Eating represents a social time for children and adults and helps children to learn about healthy eating. At snack and meal times we provide healthy, balance and nutritious food, which meets the child's individual dietary needs.

We provide cereal, milk and toast for breakfast, with a choice of spreads, a hot, nutritionally balanced dinner plus hot pudding and a varied tea menu which includes Jacket Potatoes, crackers, dips, fruit, muffins, tortillas. The dinner is cooked by a school catering service, Zebedees and tea is prepared by our kitchen staff

Children attending the holiday club need to be provided with a packed lunch.

Milk is provided at breakfast, water at dinner time and tea time. Fresh drinking water is always readily available for all the children.

For the children still in the Centre at 5pm, a drink of milk or water and fruit is offered. Menus are displayed in the foyer and copies can be made available on request.

Babies under a year old need to be provided with all food and milk from home.

We require written information regarding any specific food requirements/allergies, please see registration form.

No Smoking Policy

There is a policy of no smoking anywhere on the Centre premises.

Child Protection/Safeguarding Children

As a provider of full day care we are responsible for the well being of the children attending our Centre and governed by the Children's Act 1989. Our Child Protection/Safeguarding Policy follows procedures laid down by Kent County Council's Children's Safeguard Services and The Early Years Foundation Stage and a copy will be given to you when your child starts at the setting.

In conclusion, at Acorns we support the following aspirations for children:

'to grow up as competent and confident learners and communicators, healthy in mind, body, and spirit, secure in their sense of belonging and in the knowledge that they make a valued contribution to society.'

Taken from TeWhariki Early Childhood Curriculum. Published by Ministry of Education by Learning Media Limited, New Zealand. ©Crown copyright 1996.

ACORNS EARLY YEARS CENTRE - SCHEDULE AND CONDITIONS

1. The sessions are Monday to Friday as follows:

Full day	7.30 a.m.	-	6.00 p.m.
Morning	7.30 a.m.	-	1.00 p.m.
Afternoon	1.00 p.m.	-	6.00 p.m.

Term Time only (fully funded) Sessions are as follows:

30 Hours per week = 5 afternoons per week 12.00 p.m. - 6.00 p.m. x 38 weeks per year

15 Hours Per week = 5 Mornings per week 9.00am - 12.00pm x 38 weeks per year

FF2 15 Hours Per week to be taken over a set three afternoons per week 1.00 p.m. - 6.00 p.m. x 38 weeks per year.

All Fully Funded spaces are subject to availability.

A Term Time Calendar is displayed on our noticeboard

2. The Centre will be closed for 5 days over Christmas/New Year, in addition to all Bank/Public Holidays and for one staff development day each year.
3. The minimum age for entry to nursery is 4 months.
4. There is normally a requirement that babies under two years of age attend at least two full days per week. However in certain circumstances we will accept one day babies but reserve the right, if the baby does not settle well into the nursery, to either ask parents to increase days or withdraw from the setting. Children over two years of age need to attend a minimum of two sessions per week.
5. If any person other than a parent is collecting the child, the Centre Manager must be notified in advance who that person is. Except where there is a reasonable excuse, this information should be in writing. We ask you for a family password when you register, to be used if someone other than yourself is collecting your child.
6. If we suspect parents/carers to be under the influence of alcohol/drugs when they come to collect their children we will not release the children into their care, in accordance with safeguarding policies. We will contact alternative authorized persons to collect the children.
7. The Centre Manager or Deputy Manager must be notified if the child is to be absent for whatever reason. No refund is made when the child is absent. Please call before 10.00 a.m.

8. If the child is suffering from any illness that may be communicable, then the child may not attend the Centre until such time as the symptoms have disappeared. Such illnesses include heavy colds, viruses, doubtful rashes, sore throat, discharge from eyes, diarrhea, vomiting etc. **48 hours free from symptoms must lapse after diarrhea/vomiting.** A list of incubation exclusion periods for contagious diseases as recommended by the Kent Health Protection Unit will be given to you as part of your Welcome Pack.
9. The Centre must be notified in writing if the child suffers from any allergies, requires special medication, or requires a special diet.
10. Emergency treatment forms need to be signed at the time of registration.
11. The Centre provides all meals (for children 1-5 years), stimulating and educational activities and, if appropriate, sleeping and normal baby care facilities. Nappies are not provided. Bottles and food to be provided by parents for babies less than 1 year of age.
12. The child's clothing must be clearly marked with his/her name.
13. All articles are left at the Centre at the owner's risk.
14. For purposes of confidentiality, staff are not permitted to baby-sit for any children attending the Centre.
15. There is a policy of 'No Smoking' everywhere on the premises. Parents/carers are also requested not to use mobile phones in the setting.
16. Fees are payable in advance during the first week of each month by standing order.
17. Fees are payable for 51 weeks attendance per year. This takes into account the five working days the nursery is closed over Christmas.
18. Bank Holidays and the Annual Staff Development Day are charged at full rate. Emergency closure days due to extreme weather conditions or environmental factors beyond our control will also be charged at full rate.
19. Our monthly fees are calculated by multiplying the weekly figure by 51 and dividing by 12. In this way all months cost the same. No further reductions are made for any absences, including holidays. For children starting mid-month we calculate the actual number of days multiplied by the daily cost. This amount to be paid by cheque or BACS, with standing order payments due from the next full month.
20. Fees are reviewed once or twice a year and parents are notified at least one month in advance of any increases.
21. Fees are payable from the mutually agreed start date. Notice of no less than 3 months must be given if a start date is to be deferred. 50% of full fees will be payable if less than 3 months' notice is given.
22. One months' notice in writing needs to be given to any proposed leaving date or change to agreed sessions.

23. A non-refundable registration fee of £40.00 is payable to secure your place along with a deposit of 50% of your monthly fees. The deposit will be refunded upon your child leaving the nursery providing all fees are up to date and the appropriate notice is given.

If your booking pattern changes while attending the nursery your deposit will be adjusted accordingly. Should you decide you no longer require your place at Acorns, no less than 3 months' notice should be given. If notice is given within three months deposits will be refunded as follows:

- >3 Months - 100% refunded
- 2-3 Months - 75% Refunded
- 1-2 Months - 50% Refunded
- Less than 1 Month - deposit is non-refundable.

The Registration fee is for administration of additional services.

Registration fees and Deposits are not required from parents that are accessing fully funded spaces only.

This includes :

30 Hours per week Term Time only

15 Hours per week Term Time only

FF2 15 Hours per week Term Time only

24. Changes to fees due to a child's 2nd birthday will be made at the beginning of the month after their 2nd birthday.
25. There is a Late Fee Payment Management Procedure in place:
- Full fees due first week of the month
 - If full payment of fees is not made by 12th of the month a £10.00 late fee payment charge will be automatically applied.
 - Any outstanding balance on the 19th of the month will incur a further £10.00 late fee payment charge.
 - If any fees are still outstanding at the end of the month a further £20.00 fee will be applied and the matter will be referred to Acorns Early Years Centre Trustees, which may lead to withdrawal of nursery place or referral to an external debt collection agency.
26. There can be no exchanging of days but extra days can be booked according to availability and must be paid for at time of booking.
27. The centre closes promptly at 6 p.m. There is a surcharge for parents collecting their children late. This is £10.00 for each additional $\frac{1}{4}$ hour or part-thereof.
28. Fees are inclusive of all meals for children aged over 1 year of age. There is no reduction in fees if you decide to provide your own food for your child.
29. If any of the details on the registration form change, i.e. change of marital status, address or telephone number, it is the parents responsibility to inform Acorns immediately.

30. Information given on the Registration forms will be held in an electronic and paper format, in compliance GDPR.
31. As part of our Business Recovery Plan three senior management staff members each hold copies of all parent's telephone contact via a password protected system. This is in case of emergency closure of the setting. In the event of an emergency closure due to bad weather or any other reason, we will make every effort to contact you. Via Comms and Iconnect. Information will also be given via Radio Kent on 96.7, 97.6 or 102.4 FM. Bad weather closures will also be listed on www.kent.gov.uk on the school closure link. We will also leave messages on our answer phone or website whenever this is possible.
32. We are registered to provide free nursery education sessions for eligible 3 and 4 year olds. Separate information will be given to you regarding this before your child becomes eligible. Additional services are expected to be paid for, i.e. any care outside of the free sessions.

If you wish to admit your child to the Centre, please complete the enclosed **Registration form**, once we confirm a space is available we will advise of when your registration fee and deposit is payable.

OUR CURRENT FEE SCHEDULE.

Age	Week	Day	AM Session	PM Session
0-2 years (for one session)	£272.64	£64.15	N/A	N/A
2-5 years(for one session)	£234.39	£55.15	£30.60	£26.25

Any additional sessions, please multiply by the number of days required