

DANDELION EDUCATION CHILDREN'S NURSERY

Philosophy-led Forest School Nursery

Dandelion[®]

play

explore

imagine

learn

Ofsted

Outstanding
Provider

ABOUT DANDELION EDUCATION

Dandelion Education Ltd is a place where children grow and flourish; qualified teachers lead skilled and knowledgeable staff as they nurture and support your child in their learning journey.

Our Aim

Dandelion aims to develop your child holistically, using the environment and open questioning as a stimuli to support individual learning and personal growth. Sensitive to children's needs, tailored support enables your unique child to blossom and grow.

At Dandelion we believe that children deserve and need high-quality interactions, and because of our commitment to our ethos and beliefs, we have excellent adult:child ratios. For children aged 2 we have a ratio of 1 adult to 2 children. For children aged 3+ we have a ratio of 1 adult to 6 children. This beats government ratios of 1 qualified teacher to 13 children!

Our Team

Many of our staff hold Qualified Teacher Status (QTS); many hold special educational needs qualifications. All staff hold paediatric first-aid, food hygiene certificates, and qualifications in a range of other advantageous areas, such as music and art!

Our Awards

Dandelion has been awarded numerous awards and accolades since its creation in 2013, including best Team and best Forest School at the NMT 2022 awards and Ofsted Outstanding at Aylsham 2022. Dandelion's expertise and pioneering approach is widely recognised; its reputation for excellence has been acknowledged nationally and internationally. They continue to spread best practice and advocate for excellence in the Early Years.

Our Locations

Dandelion's unique, award-winning, outdoor settings are based within rich, diverse woodland environments. Boundary secure, each 'camp' offers a wealth of learning opportunities; composting toilets, an outdoor kitchen area, and snuggly resting spaces complement the natural space in which children can play, explore, imagine and learn.

Our Founders

As qualified teachers, with over 50 collective years of teaching experience, we know that children thrive in stimulating environments where they are free to play, explore, imagine and learn. We are passionate about our ethos, believing that all children deserve fun and meaningful learning experiences; days that are filled with care, laughter and discovery, where they are free to develop their own interests, learning at a pace that suits them. We believe that if children 'feel' well, they will think well and thus learn well.

This is the experience we wanted for our own children, so we created Dandelion Education.

Emma Harwood and Hayley Room
Founders and Managing Directors



Emma and Hayley founded Dandelion Education in 2013

WHAT WE OFFER

Dandelion offers a wide range of childcare options to suit you and your family's needs.

Dandelion's multi-award winning children's nursery for ages 2-5

Specialist Provision for children who need a little more room to grow, ages 4-8

For flexi-ed & home-ed children aged 5-8 + 6-11

THE NURSERY
THE DEN
THE PATCH
THE RECEPTION YEAR
STAY & PLAY
HOLIDAY CLUB

Stay at Dandelion for your child's reception year

Join us every holiday for a fun filled themed Holiday Club led by Dandelion's award-winning staff

Bring your family and join us at one of our Stay & Play mornings - a great introduction to Dandelion!

Stay & Play and Holiday Clubs are available to book via our website and are open to all. All other sessions are arranged by email and via the registration form.

THE NURSERY

Eaton • Wymondham
For ages 2-5

Setting

Dandelion is an entirely outdoors setting (with a warm, snugly yurt or log cabin). Our approach and ethos is unique. We combine the approaches of Philosophy for Children, with Forest School, and emotional literacy. All delivered by highly-qualified staff in a unique enabling environment.

High Staffing Levels

At Dandelion, we offer exceptional staffing levels, far above the statutory levels that the government recommends for children in England. High staffing levels ensure safety and high quality interactions.

We are strongly committed to high staffing levels as this enables us to support ALL children to: thrive and develop in all areas of learning; expand their potential; and have meaningful dialogue with the many adults on site.

The Benefits of attending Dandelion nursery

Well-being, emotional intelligence, social skills, the development of executive functioning skills, and creative and critical thinking skills are at the core of our ethos and approach.

Holistic approach: At Dandelion we focus on the development of the whole child, placing equal emphasis on all areas of learning. Dandelion's approach is cross-curricular. Dandelion follows an approach based on developmental readiness as opposed to chronological expectations. If a child shows an interest in an area of learning e.g. writing, then this is gently encouraged and supported at a time and pace that suits the child.

Attending Dandelion ensures that a child has effective skills that enable them to become lifelong, motivated learners, who are able to transition confidently into new situations. They are resilient and effective communicators, emotionally secure and able to articulately convey needs. They are able to self-regulate and are intrinsically motivated to learn.

Safeguarding

Dandelion subscribes to the SAFER program and is accredited for its safeguarding procedures. Staff undergo both in-house and external safeguarding training.

Staff qualifications

Dandelion is led by a team of experienced, qualified, teachers and SENDCos; all Dandelion staff undertake bespoke Dandelion training and access specific SEND training. Dandelion is a member of The Safer Program. All staff are DBS checked, Safeguarding, Prevent, Food hygiene and paediatric first aid trained and certificated.

Term dates

Dandelion follows Norfolk County term dates.

Next steps

If you have further questions, or would like to book a visit please contact us at:

hello@dandelioneducationltd.com. Stay and Play, and holiday dates, can be found on our website dandelioneducationltd.com/

Please find all funding, sessions and fees information at the end of this brochure.



THE DEN

Aylsham • Wymondham For ages 5-8 & 6-11

Dandelion Den sessions are managed by qualified teachers & Forest school practitioners who create exciting days in the wilderness of our Aylsham and Wymondham woods.

Dandelion's Den is a marriage of Forest school principles and our philosophy for children approach. In the Den, Children are free to choose from a range of planned activities, or to engage in child-led/self-directed activities.

The Den is for families who have chosen to Home educate or flexi Educate their children.

Flexi education and Home education

Dandelion Den compliments our positive approach to both home and flexi education. We work in partnership with the Home Education community and local schools to promote our approach to gentle, child led learning. We believe that children thrive out of doors working with knowledgeable, experienced, ethos driven teachers.

Flexi education: Attend Dandelion for one or two days a week and school for the remaining three or four days.

Home education: Children are educated at home with their families and, as part of their education, attend Dandelion once or twice a week.

Sessions are held in a fence-free area, it is important that children have a degree of self regulation.

Dandelion Den Curriculum

Dandelion's Den focuses on the development of emotional literacy, risk awareness, physical and executive functioning skills, alongside peer collaboration and emotional wellbeing. The Dandelion curriculum forms the foundation of learning within Dandelion's Den.

The curriculum engages minds, inspires play, builds confidence and nurtures a love of learning for its own sake. Through the environment and with the support of skilled teachers, children take part in purposeful, meaningful experiences. The curriculum is inclusive, child-led and democratic, and is underpinned by Dandelion's core values, ethos and pedagogy.

The curriculum is structured around key areas including den building, philosophy, mindfulness and tool work. Children are supported to choose areas of interest and develop key skills at their own pace, building confidence and self-esteem through meaningful, self-directed learning.

Activities Include

Philosophy sessions, Creative & critical thinking/problem solving, Crafts, Den building, Fire making and Tool use.

Food

We provide brunch; families send a packed lunch and drinking water.

Staffing

Staff are DBS checked and thoroughly Dandelion trained.



THE PATCH

Aylsham • Wymondham
For ages 4-8

Dandelion Education's Alternative Provision

Catering for children aged 4-8, with a range of Additional/Special Needs, The Patch offers a beautiful, specially designed, enabling and secure, woodland environment; a space in which children who need a little more room to grow, can thrive and flourish.

Children are supported and empowered by a highly skilled team who nurture a wide range of skills through an inclusive, child-led and democratic curriculum, underpinned by Dandelion's core values, ethos and pedagogy.

Dandelion's environment and approach is particularly suitable for children whose needs include those associated with; trauma; anxiety, emotional social and behavioural development, mental health issues, low self-esteem and low levels of confidence.

Staff qualifications

Dandelion is led by a team of experienced, qualified, teachers and SENDCos; all Dandelion staff undertake bespoke Dandelion training and access specific SEND training.

Lenny, Dandelion's SEND operational manager, also holds an assessor qualification in educational, forensic and occupational testing, registered by the British Psychological Society. She is able to support applications for Education and Health Care plans (EHCPs).

Dandelion is a member of The Safer Program; all staff are DBS checked, Safeguarding, Prevent and FGM trained.

The Patch Curriculum

The Dandelion Patch curriculum forms the foundation of learning at The Patch. It engages minds, inspires play, builds confidence and nurtures a love of learning for its own sake. Through the environment and with the support of skilled teachers, children take part in purposeful, meaningful experiences.

The curriculum is structured around key areas, including managing risk, mindfulness and tool work. Children are supported to choose which areas they wish to focus on, with learning shaped through their interests, curiosity and readiness.

Dandelion's aim is to develop confidence and self-esteem, empowering children to become independent, reflective and self-aware.



RECEPTION YEAR

Eaton • Wymondham For ages 4-5

For many children, age 4 is too young to begin formal schooling.

Dandelion strongly advocates for a later school entry date. Exceptional early years teaching and learning at Dandelion meets the needs of Reception aged children in numerous ways including; academic, physical and emotional development.

Each Dandelion site employs teachers with experience across the primary sector: staff are fully equipped and aware of where children 'need to go'; retaining children for at least their reception year is an obvious option for Dandelion; we suggest either deferment, delay, or flexi-schooling for at least the term after your child is 5.

Delay

The early years government funding for childcare, allocated to all families with children aged 3+, may still be claimed until the term after your child turns 5; this is when your child becomes of compulsory school age (CSA).

Thus, a child's place in a school may legally be delayed until this time. This request is often granted, however, your child's allocated place for the following year may not be honoured. The willingness to accept a delay is at the headteacher's discretion.

Unless your child has developmental needs the school is likely to insist that your child enters year 1 and 'skips' the school's Reception year.

This will not affect your child at Dandelion, as our staff includes qualified teachers who know how to best support Reception aged children and how to support effective transitions.

Defer

Any summer born child (born between 1st April to the 31st August) can accept an offer of a school place in a Reception class, and then postpone their start in the Reception year. You can also request part-time attendance for summer born children.

Our children hugely benefit socially and emotionally from a deferred year. Foundations are vital and the value of this extra year laying these securely is priceless.

Flexi

This is a 'guarded' option that education authorities would rather remained a secret! But, we fight for Flexi. We have found that children thrive, not just survive, using this blended approach to teaching and learning.

Put simply, your child splits their week between a mainstream setting and Dandelion. The split is usually 1 day with Dandelion and 4, with either a school, or home-educated by you.



HOLIDAY CLUB

Eaton
For ages 3-8

Rain or shine, fun is to be had at Dandelion's holiday club!

Children aged 3-8 years can choose to take part in tool work, woodland art and craft, den building, mud slinging, fire building, cooking on an open fire and much more!

Brunch is cooked and shared on an open fire, and fruit snacks are provided.

Each holiday Club is themed with lots of enriching themed activities on offer.



STAY & PLAY

**Wymondham
For ages 0-100**

About Wild Adventurers Stay & Play

Dandelion's Stay & Play offer exciting opportunities for families to take part in adventurous and muddy activities, without the worry of having to clean up your own house!

Staff plan a stimulating theme that will engage both you and your child.

Sing around the fire, share a warm brunch cooked on an open fire, make new friends, or hook-up with old ones!

Take part in sticky craft activities, roll in mud, climb a tree, or read in a tranquil nook...

Take home a work of art, or nothing but memories, the choice is yours!

All sessions are led by qualified teachers with sacks of experience and truck loads of energy!

Please visit the website to see available dates and book your spaces.



OUR LOCATIONS

Wymondham Dandelion, Norfolk Farm Venue, Potash Lane, Hethel, NR14 8EY

Situated within minutes of Wymondham town, Dandelion's Hethel site is nestled within a vast 3 acre woodland surrounded by fields, where you might find us taking a picnic!

The Wymondham (Hethel) site has the main nursery setting, which caters for 2-5 year olds; the Dandelion Den also has a home at Hethel and supports children aged 5-8 & 6-11 years who are either home-ed or flexi-ed.

You will also find The Patch at Hethel, which works with schools and families whose children, aged 4-8, have a higher level need that cannot be met in conventional settings.

Dandelion is a highly enabling award-winning environment; the rich site has been developed with all natural, and often recycled materials, ready to aid learning through play, adventure and exploration.

Eaton Dandelion, Eaton Vale, Church Lane, Eaton, NR4 6NN

Our beautiful Eaton site is situated just a short distance from Norwich City Centre on the edge of the scenic grounds at Eaton Vale Scout site.

Dandelion is a highly enabling environment, the site has been developed with all natural and often recycled materials ready to aid learning through play and exploration.

This rich learning environment has all the natural equipment a little adventurer could wish for!

Eaton Vale: Just minutes from the centre of the historic city of Norwich, you will find the idyllic site of Dandelion. Hidden within the grounds of the private Eaton Vale Scout Centre you will find Dandelion within a high secure fence, amongst the trees.

The marshes along the lane offers the holiday club children opportunities to explore and adventure further afield.

Aylsham Dandelion, Brick Kiln Wood, Woodgate Way, Aylsham, NR11 6FJ

Our beautiful Aylsham site is nestled in our stunning Dandelion woodland just a mile outside of Aylsham.

Here you will find a Dandelion Den for home-educated and flexi-educated children and the Dandelion Patch, which is a Specialist provision.

Dandelion is a highly enabling environment; the site has been developed with all natural and often recycled materials ready to aid learning through play and exploration. You can also find The Patch information in the Wymondham blurb.

This rich learning environment has all the natural equipment an adventurer could wish for!

Aylsham: Minutes from the popular market town of Aylsham, you will find 4.5 acres of serene woodland; park in Dandelion's private car park, follow the meandering path, and look within.

OUR TEAM

Dandelion knows that high-quality learning and development is only possible when skilled, trained, knowledgeable adults provide respectful and supportive relationships in an enabling environment. Dandelion prides itself on offering high adult to child ratios; it offers a bespoke training program with regular professional development opportunities so that every teacher can engage in meaningful play, teaching and learning with every child.

Every staff member at Dandelion is respected, valued and trusted; each adult offers a range of skills and experiences that ensures that every child thrives. Each adult is vital to the Dandelion team; whatever their skill set, each adult has found a home at Dandelion, a home in which they can thrive alongside the children!

Head to the website to meet the full team <https://www.dandelioneducationltd.com/our-team>



OFSTED REPORTS

2025 **Outstanding** in all areas: Wymondham

2022 **Outstanding** in all areas: Aylsham

2021 **Good** in all areas: Eaton | 2017 **Outstanding** in all areas: Marsham

"Teaching consistently builds on children's communication and language at every opportunity."

"Children's behaviour is exemplary, and they move around the site with care and consideration for others."

"Staff are wonderful role models, and treat all children with respect, care and kindness."



"Children communicate with confidence and joy."

"Inspirational leadership and vision."

"A model of inclusion – every child is valued and celebrated."

"Exceptional teaching that inspires curiosity and resilience."

Helen Oakden, Ofsted Inspector

Quotes from our 2022 Outstanding report

Tracy Joyce, Ofsted Inspector

Quotes from our 2025 Outstanding report

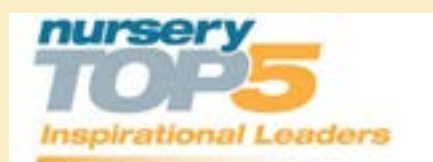
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AWARDS & ACCOLADES

Email us for a full list of our awards and accolades



OVERVIEWS & UPDATES

Themed overviews

Collaboration and communication are key!

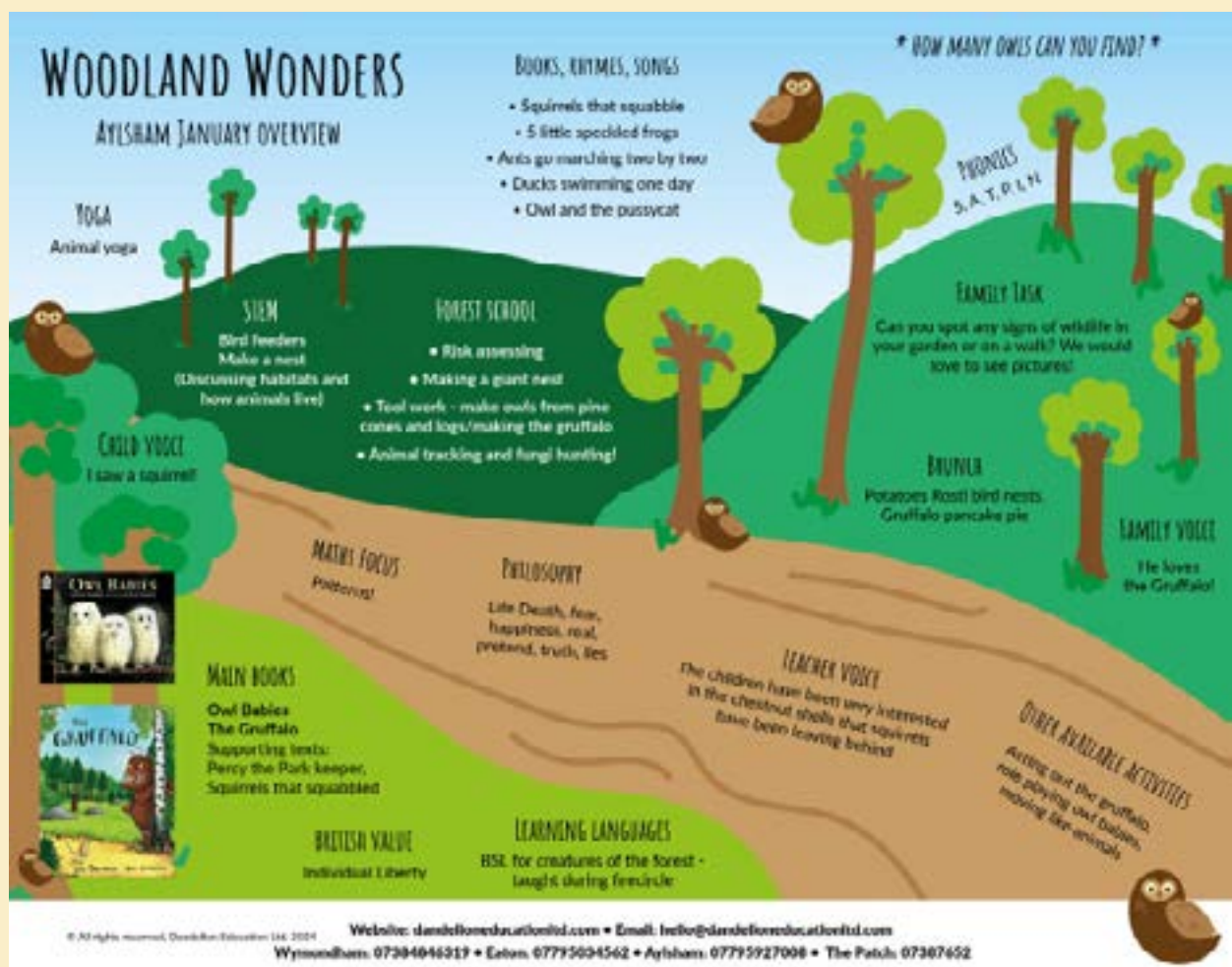
Our themed overviews, shared half termly, offer you a glimpse of the adventures your child is experiencing at Dandelion. Knowing the potential activities, philosophical concepts, themes (and snacks!) can support you as you prompt a discussion about your child's day. You can also use the information on your overview to continue your child's learning at home, and link this to their experiences at Dandelion.

Family Area

Password protected, you'll find everything you might need to know on the family area of our website. Policies, procedures, calendars, and contact details, plus past Updates and Highlights, can all be found here.

Family Events

Being part of a community engenders a sense of belonging and love. Here at Dandelion we work hard to build a community that works and plays together. Our annual Family Fun Day is vital for the development of our community. Families and staff share food, chat around the fire, and enjoy a range of Dandelion activities. Friendships formed at Dandelion often continue beyond the gate and many families have formed life-long friendships.





FAQS

How will my child keep warm in the winter/dry in the rain/cool in the sun?

At Dandelion we provide a recommended kit list. As long as children wear appropriate clothing they are warm and dry whatever the weather! We have either a warm yurt or a cabin if we ever need a cosy warm place to snuggle. Children can use this at almost any time of the day, it is a place for resting, napping, reading and quiet games. In the sun, we apply sun cream on a regular basis, legionnaires hats and long sleeved tops must be worn, again we provide a recommended kit list. We have covered areas where shaded activities are based.

Where do they go to the toilet?

We have a gorgeous composteer toilet with a child seat. The children learn how to use this, as it is a little different to your loo at home! We also have a changing shed for children in nappies; there's also a potty in here for children to use while in the transition from potty to loo.

Do you help with/encourage potty training?

Dandelion policy is always child-centred; we work with the child, when they are ready, and potty training is always in discussion with carers. Research shows that forcing children out of nappies too soon can be damaging for the child; we believe that training should be linked to the stage of development rather than the age of the child.

What happens in extreme weather?

Our yurt/cabin is built for extreme weather. We risk assess daily, check weather forecasts and have foul weather plans in place for any eventuality. We never close but, if the forecast is for extremely high winds, we can safely evacuate onto adjacent fields. Each site is well equipped for an evacuation, with grab bags and boxes full of themed activities, food, first aid supplies, spare clothing and more! The field sites have separate toilets that can be used safely in extreme weather. Families will be informed before the session if we expect to evacuate.

How do you help to prepare the children for school?

Over 30% of staff are qualified teachers; as such they are aware of the skills children need to make that next step. We use opportunities in play to practise our phonics, but it must be for a purpose and is an organic part of the play. We have a daily phonics session, which involves games and songs, which children may choose to take part in, or not. This is differentiated to both scaffold and extend every child. We use an evidence based resource: Read, Write INC to help get children ready for early reading/writing. We also offer family meetings where we demonstrate how we teach phonics to your child; we plan daily play activities that will: encourage number recognition and number skills; encourage mark-making; promote letter recognition and book skills for early reading; we plan daily play activities that will build independent skills; skills needed for problem-solving, for working with others and collaborating, for language acquisition/skills and for promoting confident communication skills with both adults and children; we plan opportunities for thinking independently, for building resilience, self-efficacy creative/critical thinking and positive decision making; we plan all of the above through both forest school and philosophy based activities.

Do you have set activities/how structured is the day?

We plan our weeks through child-led themes/interests and cover all areas of the Early Years Framework. Children can choose to take part in activities that are adult-led, but practitioners always follow the child's interests and needs and children may play in any area they wish at all times; they may ask for help with a self-directed task at all times. We meet around the fire for a warm snack and story-time, at around 10.00am, and all children eat at the table at lunchtime around 12.30 pm.

FAQS

What happens if a child does not want to take part in an activity?

We offer children positive choices, but would never force a child to take part in an activity if they do not wish to do so.

How will they be kept safe round the fire?

We have a wooden screen around the fire; the children are taught the fire safety rules from day 1 of attendance; we learn these through singing and modelling.

Aren't tools dangerous for young children? I am worried my child might hurt themselves.

It is vital that children are taught to manage risk for themselves; at Dandelion we allow an element of risk that has been pre managed by staff, thus exposing children to a small element that allows them to develop their own management systems, build problem solving skills, responsibility, confidence, self-efficacy and resilience. Forest school tools are always used on a 1-1 basis with a forest school trained practitioner; children are taught the safety rules from day 1.

What happens if my child has an accident?

All staff hold 16 hour paediatric first aid qualifications. We have policies and procedures in place to manage any accidents, this includes a protocol where parents are contacted first and immediately, if the accident necessitates an ambulance, emergency services are then called immediately and a member of staff is on-hand to travel to the hospital with the child if needed.

How will you comfort my child if they are upset? Do you give cuddles?

As in all settings, we comfort children when they are upset, and we insist that our staff are nurturing with children; we believe that hugs are important to build bonds, but are respectful and ask children if they need a hug first. Staff are always available to offer comfort when needed.

Does going to a forest school nursery make it harder to settle into a 'normal' school?

The skills we develop at Dandelion are vital life skills that help to create motivated life-long learners; the skills we focus on enable children to manage change and transition with resilience and independence. From feedback we have 100% agreement from families that their children have moved into their primary setting with confidence, independence, high functioning social skills and an enthusiasm for learning.

How do you deal with challenging behaviour?

At Dandelion we follow the therapeutic approach to behaviour management; This is a gentle, non-threatening approach based on positive choices which allows the children to be in control of their own behaviours and enables them to make a connection between the action and the consequence. We NEVER use the word naughty, and NEVER use time out or 'naughty-steps'. See our Promoting Positive Behaviour policy on the policies page. Dandelion offers training for families which is available in our shop. We also offer our Dandelion Dialogue cards and behaviour scripts.



INTERESTED IN DANDELION?

Next steps...

Now

- **Book a free site tour**
- **Fill in the registration form**

Once registered

- **Book a Stay & Play session**
- **Log into the family area and download your welcome pack**
- **Familiarise yourself with our policies and procedures**

Before you start

- **A 1 : 1 meeting with the manager or lead teacher.**

The beginning of Dandelion's gentle, 'no tears' approach to settling, is a meeting between the manager / lead teacher, and the child's parent or main carer. This is a brief initial meeting where you will be asked vital questions , enabling us to provide a gentle and effective settling program for your child; we must ensure we know how to meet your child's needs and interests. You will be given the opportunity to share as much information as possible. You know your child best, we work with you to support a gentle and secure settling.

- **Settling sessions**

Your settling sessions align with the days you have registered to attend. For example, if your child is registered to attend on a Monday, Wednesday and Thursday, your settling sessions will be on these 3 days.

The settling session times will vary depending on the age of your child: For children who are 2 years old at the start of September, settling sessions times will be: 9:30 - 10:30 am. For children who are 3 or 4 years old at the start of September, settling sessions times will be: 1:45 - 2:45 pm.

- **Watch your new starter film and get excited to start at Dandelion!**



Dandelion®

play

explore

imagine

learn