



**Panda Playgroup,
Sticky Mitts and
Tiny Tots**

**Prospectus
October 2014**



Panda Playgroup, Sticky Mitts and Tiny Tots

WI Hall, Station Road, Copmanthorpe, YO23 3SX

Member of the Pre-School Learning Alliance

Registered charity number 1035584

Ofsted number 321619

About us

At Panda Playgroup we plan our activities around each child, to further their interests and make sure they reach each new stage of development and learning with confidence.

Our Panda journey starts with **Tiny Tots**, a stay, weigh and play session. We warmly welcome parents/carers and babies, and we provide a stimulating sensory environment for children to explore. At each session we enjoy a song time – so brush up on your nursery rhymes and be prepared to learn some new ones! At this session you can also make use of our baby scales. We are the only playgroup that offers this popular service in the village.

When your child reaches 18 months, **Sticky Mitts** is the next stage. This drop-in session offers a more challenging play environment for little explorers. We have craft activities (so come dressed for mess!), toys and song time.

From the age of two, children are eligible to join our pre-school **Panda Playgroup**. The playgroup is a member of the Pre-school Learning Alliance and is registered with Ofsted.

The latest Ofsted report (2009) can be found via the website. Ofsted reported that "Overall the quality of the provision is good". Our aim is to provide your child with the best support and care as they take their first steps towards starting school.

Panda Playgroup, Sticky Mitts and Tiny Tots have been at the heart of Copmanthorpe village for over 25 years. We are a registered charity (number 1035584), run by a voluntary committee mainly made up of Panda parents and carers.



www.pandaplaygroup.co.uk

Like us on Facebook – "Panda Playgroup, Sticky Mitts & Tiny Tots"

Make www.easyfundraising.org.uk/causes/ppsmmt your homepage

Mission Statement

- This is a place where children are encouraged to develop a positive sense of themselves and their abilities.
- This is a place where children are encouraged to build close and lasting relationships.
- This is a place where children are helped to feel secure through the development of safe boundaries.
- This is a place where parents are valued and encouraged to take an active part in their children's learning and in the running of the Playgroup.
- This is a place where children are encouraged to explore outdoors and indoors and gain the confidence to solve their own problems, set their own challenges and manage their own risks.
- This is a place where children are encouraged to freely engage in different experiences; enthusiastically, messily and spontaneously.
- This is a place where children are at the centre of all activities and are supported and encouraged to make their own choices.
- This is a place where children are supported as unique learners to develop their full potential.
- This is a place that we all create together.



Tiny Tots - Tuesdays



This is where we start. Tiny Tots is our session for babies from birth to 18 months and introduces social interaction through play. At this session you also have the opportunity to weigh your baby using our self-weigh baby scales – don't forget your red book!



Sticky Mitts - Mondays



Sticky Mitts is our stay and play session for toddlers. It offers a more creative environment, with emphasis on painting, gluing, model-making and music. Sticky Mitts is seen as the next step towards joining Panda Playgroup.





Best of Both ... Wednesdays



Join us for an All Age Session on a Wednesday where the best of Sticky Mitts and Tiny Tots combine to make a session that is fun for all. Again on a Wednesday the weighing scales will be available to enable you to self-weigh your baby/child.

Tiny Tots and Sticky Mitts are 9.15-11.15 am at Copmanthorpe Methodist Church Hall and are drop-in sessions – no need to register beforehand! Drinks and biscuits/healthy snacks provided for parents/carers and children.



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Panda Playgroup

Panda Playgroup sessions run during term-time on Monday to Thursday mornings (9am-12 noon) and Thursday afternoons (12:30pm-2:30pm).



Children are encouraged to pursue their own interests through free play, as well as taking part in more structured group activities such as story and song time. Our indoor and outdoor activities include:

- Painting
- Drawing
- Play dough
- Craft
- Singing
- Music and dancing
- Construction
- Stories
- Number games
- Role play
- Baking
- Sand and water play
- Information and Communications Technology (ICT)
- Jigsaws and games
- Miniature world
- Sensory play
- Trikes and scooters
- Climbing and balancing





Each child has a learning journal that is used to record their interests and development, containing photos, comments and some of their art work.



Panda Plus

Panda Plus runs on Tuesday afternoons 12.30pm to 3.30pm and is primarily for children who are in their final year at Panda and will start school the next September. Children over 3 years old, but who are not starting school the next year, can attend the sessions if there are places available and the playgroup leader believes that they would gain sufficient benefit from the sessions. Please note that in order to start the Panda Plus sessions in the summer term, a child must be due to start school that September.

In Panda Plus sessions, children are more involved in planning and thinking about their learning. We include fun phonics activities to help children build the skills they need for reading and writing. Panda Plus also gives older children a chance to use smaller equipment, such as Lego.

We have close links with Copmanthorpe Primary School, and some Panda Plus sessions are used to visit the school ahead of children starting in September.

Lunch Club

Lunch Club runs from 12pm to 12.30pm on Tuesdays and Thursdays.

Children attending the morning Panda sessions are welcome to join us for Lunch Club. This allows children to enjoy a social lunch with friends, and joins the Tuesday Panda and Panda Plus sessions and the Thursday morning and afternoon Panda sessions.

Children attending the afternoon sessions on Tuesday (Panda Plus) or Thursday (Panda) are also invited to bring a packed lunch and socialise with their friends before the sessions begin at 12.30pm.

Keyworker

When your child starts at the playgroup, he or she will be allocated a keyworker. Your child's keyworker is responsible for cooperating closely with you to provide the best learning outcomes for your child, communicating your child's progress with you, and updating their learning journal.

If your child has particular learning needs or a disability, we will discuss with you how to best meet their requirements. Our staff have continued specialist training to ensure that each child's needs are met.



Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)

The EYFS is the stage of children's development from birth to the end of reception year in school. The EYFS Framework describes how all Early Years Providers should work with families to support and guide their children's learning and development. It also describes how children can be safe and cared for, to ensure they reach their highest potential.

All our team have recently received training on the Early Years Foundation Stage, and make use of the valuable resources and guidance that it provides.

The EYFS has four themes that underpin the guidance. These principles work together, to foster the characteristics of effective learning. The principles are:

- A unique child
- Positive relationships
- Enabling environments
- Learning and development.



“Children learn and develop well in enabling environments, in which their experiences respond to their individual needs and there is a strong partnership between practitioners and carers.”

(Development Matters, EYFS 2012)

The EYFS separates Learning and Development into seven areas: three prime areas and four specific areas. These enable all children to progress at individual levels, whilst ensuring that a child's unique interests and needs are met.



The three prime areas are:

- Personal, social and emotional development
- Communication and language
- Physical development.

The four specific areas are:

- Literacy
- Mathematics
- Understanding the world
- Expressive arts and design.

You will become more familiar with these terms, as they are used when we share our observations of your child, and will be detailed in their learning journal.

Trips and visits

With parents'/carers' help, we arrange a number of trips each term to different places of interest in the village. This gives children a greater understanding of the world around them. Recently we've been exploring the Rec, browsed books in the library and visited the local farm.

We've also welcomed some very special visitors to the playgroup, including vets, hospital workers, teachers – and even chickens! Panda Playgroup is also lucky enough to have visits from the Police and Firefighters. Children get a chance to sit in the vehicles, try out sirens and hoses and dress up, all the while learning a bit more about the emergency services and the important jobs they do.

Events

Panda Playgroup is at the heart of the Copmanthorpe community. Here are some of the events we're involved with:

May Day Fair and Copmanthorpe Carnival

Each year Panda Playgroup runs a stall at both of these events offering face painting, cakes and sweets for sale, as well as games like hook a duck. We also work in partnership with other Copmanthorpe childcare providers and together, all the children sing on stage to open the hugely popular music event, the Copmanthorpe Carnival!



Christmas Nativity

The children spend a lot of time rehearsing and making props and costumes for our annual play, which is performed for relatives and friends at the end of autumn term – usually on a Sunday. The day itself includes refreshments and a raffle, and is a great chance to socialise with other parents and carers.



Our Team

Panda Playgroup has an exemplary team of qualified, dedicated staff, all of whom have received training in First Aid, Food Hygiene and Safeguarding Children.

We encourage all staff to achieve further training and qualifications as recommended by York City Council, and many of our staff are now working towards further qualifications to ensure that we continue to offer excellent provision.

Here's a bit more about our team:

Mel Suttill, Playgroup Leader

HNC Advanced Practice in Working with Children and Families Level 4.
Training towards Assessor of Childcare.

"I became Panda Playgroup Leader in September 2013 having worked with children since 1999 within supervisory or leadership positions.

I have always built up excellent relationships with parents and carers using my friendly approach and professionalism, and more importantly, gaining brilliant friendships with the children. They can enjoy playing, fun and games and build up happy memories as they grow and learn. I enjoy assisting the children through their play and gain so much pleasure in watching them overcome life's little hurdles and enjoy a sense of achievement."

Melanie McCarthy, Deputy Leader (Panda Playgroup), SENCo.

Certificate in Pre-School Practice Level 3

"I have been working as Assistant Leader at Panda Playgroup since January 2004. I ran the mothers and toddlers group for about a year when my son was a baby and helped with the joining and transition of the playgroups when Panda Playgroup moved to the WI Hall. I then had a break and went to do my Access into Healthcare and then when my son started school, I became Assistant Leader at Panda Playgroup.



I have been working and caring for children for as long as I can remember! I have been a nanny, an assistant playgroup leader at a playgroup for children with special needs, youth leader, assistant in a nursery class, child-minder, mum of three wonderful children, Share Care and Assistant Leader at Panda Playgroup.

The special essence of Panda Playgroup is the parents, children and work colleagues which makes it an essential part of the community for families with very young children. The friendships formed at Tiny Tots, Sticky Mitts and Panda Playgroup is why Pandas is a great place to be."

Sharron Little, Tiny Tots and Sticky Mitts Leader

Paediatric First Aid Certificate, Basic Food Hygiene, Child Protection Level 1, Disability Equality Level 1
Training towards Children and Young People's Workforce Level 2.

"After 15 years working in law, I brought my baby daughter to a Panda Baby Session and have been hooked ever since. I was on the committee for a number of years, serving as Treasurer and dealing with Admissions. When my daughter started at school, I filled in at Sticky Mitts one morning a week and now run all three stay and play sessions at the Methodist Church Hall. I also help out at Panda Playgroup."

Nikki Burrows, Early Years Assistant

Diploma for the Children and Young People's Workforce Level 3

"I have been involved with Panda Playgroup since 2006, first as a Mum then I took on the role of Chair on the committee for two years. While I was doing that I decided to study childcare and take on a more permanent role at the playgroup. I have recently completed First Aid, Food Handling and Disability Awareness."

Sharon Price, Playgroup Assistant

"I'm also a Panda mum, although my children are growing fast and at university or the Grammar School. I've been a Playgroup Assistant at Panda since 2005, and have recently completed training in First Aid, Food Handling and Disability Awareness."

Geraldine Brooks, Playgroup Assistant

Qualified to Level 2.
Training towards Level 3.

"I moved to Copmanthorpe from London in 2002, when my son was just a year old. I was recommended Panda Playgroup Mother & Baby session by my neighbours. We were made to feel very welcomed by the staff and very quickly made some lovely new friends, who are still a big part of our lives."



I got involved in Panda Playgroup as the Secretary on the committee in 2004 and then started working as a Playgroup Assistant in 2005, when my son started school. I left Panda in 2009 to have my beautiful daughter Martha, and have returned to work at Panda now that Martha is old enough.

I have worked with a number of different leaders, staff members and committee members over the years, all of whom have worked as a fantastic team to ensure that Panda Playgroup continues to provide a brilliant and safe environment for children to flourish and grow, long into the future."

Our committee

Panda Playgroup is run by a management committee of parents and carers who take care of all the bits you don't see, such as paying rent and wages, funding and admissions, press, marketing and fundraising activities.

Volunteering as a member of the committee is a challenging task, but one that is rewarding in so many ways. Our volunteers gain valuable experience of all aspects of running a charity, as well as the social side of being part of a team. If you think you could be a key part of running our great playgroup, or you could offer a few hours to help us out, then please get in touch.

Fundraising

Panda Playgroup is a community playgroup. We keep our fees as low as we can, to give everyone the chance to access affordable childcare. That means we have to work really hard at fundraising to cover our costs. Some of the ways we do this are:

- **Used Toy Sale.** We launched this event in February 2012. It was so popular and successful we have now made it a regular event.
- **Coffee mornings.** These give parents, carers and staff a chance to socialise and raise money for the playgroup. Lots of yummy cakes, crafts, face painting and stalls.
- **Professional photo sittings.** Every year (in time for Christmas), we invite parents to have professional photos taken of their family/children/child. This hugely popular event is fantastic value for money and a percentage of the cost goes towards the running costs of Panda Playgroup
- **Regular events such as our Nativity, the May Day Fair and Copmanthorpe Carnival.** We regularly ask for donations for these events and for support on the day setting up, running the stall, clearing up etc. We also rely on families attending these events to have some fun while supporting Panda Playgroup.



- **One-off events such as pamper evenings, comedy nights or Italian Nights.** Please come along to any such events we organise to have some fun, and make new friends while supporting Panda Playgroup
- **EasyFundraising.org.uk** – The online shopping directory www.easyfundraising.org.uk/causes/ppsmtt features over 2400 retailers including Amazon, John Lewis, Debenhams, M&S and many more. A commission is given to Panda Playgroup each time you shop with these retailers via the link. Please make this your homepage. It costs you no more than a couple of extra seconds each time you shop online and Panda Playgroup will receive a percentage of your purchase. If you install the toolbar to your web browser, it will remind you each time you visit one of the partner sites. Also ppsmtt.easysearch.org.uk is a search engine equivalent of Google which donates half a pence for each search carried out.

We welcome any help we can get from parents/carers. Some of the ways in which you can make a difference are:

- Join the committee. We always appreciate the help and input of parents/carers and grandparents whether in one of the specific roles or as a general committee member.
- Give a little of your time to help run our events. This could be running a stall, tidying up the Hall after an event or helping with the preparation for one of our events. All help is much appreciated.
- Come along to our committee meetings. You will receive a warm welcome and your input into the running of Panda Playgroup will be much appreciated.
- Bringing in your empty cardboard boxes and pots for our painting and gluing sessions.
- Support fundraising by attending our events and spreading the word.



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Session times and fees

Session	Venue	Days	Times	Cost
Tiny Tots (birth - 18 months)	Methodist Hall	Tuesdays Wednesdays (all ages)	9:15am – 11:15am	£2.75 (to 18 months) £3.00 (18 months plus)
Sticky Mitts (18 months plus)	Methodist Hall	Mondays Wednesdays (all ages)	9:15am – 11:15am	£2.75 (to 18 months) £3.00 (18 months plus)
Panda Playgroup (two to five years)	WI Hall	Mondays Tuesdays Wednesdays Thursdays Thursdays	9am - 12pm 12:30pm - 2:30pm	£10.50 £7.00
Panda Plus	WI Hall	Tuesdays	12:30pm – 3:30pm	£10.50
Lunch Club	WI Hall	Tuesdays Thursdays	12pm – 12:30pm	£2.50

We accept childcare vouchers (from Computershare Voucher Services, Accor Edenred Childcare Vouchers, KiddiVouchers and Fideliti – others can be set up on request), cash and cheques (unfortunately we cannot set up BACS payments at this time). Nursery Education Funding is available from the term following a child's third birthday. Please ask for more details.

Invoices are sent out during the first week of each half term, along with a date for payment. Please note that as we are a charity we encourage all fees to be paid on or before this date. The playgroup has the right to increase session fees, and will notify parents/carers in writing prior to any increase.

Duty helpers

Panda Playgroup is a registered charity, and our fees alone don't cover our costs. Because of this, we ask parents/carers to be part of a duty helper rota. A parent duty involves providing a healthy snack and returning early to one or two sessions each half term to help out with washing up. While we do not wish to insist that parents come in for the full session on their 'helper' day, it would make a huge difference to the staff if you did feel able to do so. An extra pair of hands and eyes to play with the children, read stories, assist with crafts, as well as help with clearing up makes a massive difference.



Come and meet us

Sticky Mitts and Tiny Tots run every week during term time. There's no need to book – just drop in.

If you would like to arrange a visit to Panda Playgroup, we will be happy to show you around. To arrange a time to visit either call or email pandaplaygroupadmissions@yahoo.co.uk or use the contact form on our website (www.pandaplaygroup.co.uk)

Further information

Our website can be found at www.pandaplaygroup.co.uk and has up-to-date information on sessions, fees, fundraising events, information for parents and newsletters, as well as links to the latest Ofsted report.

Contact details

You can email us at pandaplaygroupadmissions@yahoo.co.uk, or use the contact form on our website (www.pandaplaygroup.co.uk).

Parent Information

We want you to help us understand more about your child, and consider the wellbeing of others. Therefore we ask the following:

- Bring your child along, and stay with them for a session or two before they start. We do not charge for these settling visits.
- Be prepared to stay with your child on the first day, and for as many sessions as it takes for your child to feel confident enough to be left on his/her own.
- Let us know if your child has any known allergies or dietary requirements.
- If your child experiences vomiting or diarrhoea, please wait until 48 hours after the last attack before your child returns to playgroup. This will help to minimise the risk of any infection spreading.
- For security, inform the playgroup leader if anyone else will be collecting your child, and make an appropriate entry in the daily Registration Form.

It would also be helpful if you could:

- Provide nametags for your child's coat, bag and other belongings.
- Discourage your child from bringing their own toys in to playgroup, as they can easily be broken or mislaid. Soft toy comforters, however, are the exception.



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- Send your child to playgroup in practical clothing that you don't mind getting messy. As we provide activities involving paint, glue, etc. we advise that you don't send your child to playgroup in brand new clothes. Children also need to have suitable clothing and footwear for outdoor play. All items should be clearly marked with the child's name.
- Ensure that no valuables are brought into the playgroup, as we cannot accept liability for loss or damage of any personal property.

Partnership bags

Partnership art bags are used at Panda Playgroup. These bags can also be used at other child care provisions in the village and are very useful. The bags are A3 in size and are used for taking children's artwork and playgroup correspondence home after sessions. Every child that attends the setting is offered the chance to purchase a partnership bag, and to use a communication book so that staff and parents/carers and other providers can in keep in touch with one another.

Parking

Panda Playgroup is run from rented premises and, unfortunately, we do not have our own car park. However there is ample street parking and we ask that you park with consideration for other people using the playgroup, and also for the local residents. Panda Playgroup accepts no responsibility for injury, damage or loss to persons, vehicle or property.

Upon arrival your child must only be handed over to a recognised member of playgroup staff. At the end of a playgroup session, children will not be released to any person other than a known parent/carer unless we have been previously notified.

Notice of leaving/changing sessions/additional sessions

If you would like to increase or reduce your child's regular sessions please speak to our playgroup leader. The maximum number of children per session is 20, and we operate a waiting list when sessions are full.

We require one half-term's written notice if you intend to withdraw your child from the playgroup.

Policies and Procedures

A copy of all our policies and procedures can be found on the playgroup signing-in table in the WI Hall or downloaded at www.pandaplaygroup.co.uk.



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Absence policy

For the full Absence policy see Policies folder or website as above.

If your child is not attending their regular session because of illness, please notify the playgroup leader on the Panda Playgroup phone (**07758 668107**).

Any child suffering from an infectious rash, sickness, diarrhoea or a high temperature should not come in to playgroup. The playgroup leader has the right to refuse a child entry if they show any signs of the above.

Should a child become ill during their time at playgroup, every effort will be made to contact the parent/carer. Parents/carers are asked to refer to the illness/communicable disease list supplied for your information on minimum periods of exclusion.

We reserve the right to admit any child to hospital in an emergency. Parents/carers will be contacted immediately should this occur.

Exclusion procedure for illness/communicable disease

Minimum periods of exclusion from Panda Playgroup:

Disease	Exclusion period
Chicken pox	For five days after rash appears.
Diarrhoea and vomiting	Free from symptoms for at least 48 hours.
Hepatitis A	For five days after onset of jaundice.
Impetigo	Until lesions are crusted or healed.
Measles	For four days after rash appears.
Mumps	For five days after onset of swollen glands.
Ringworm	None – proper treatment by the GP is important.
Rubella (German Measles)	For five days after the onset of the rash.
Scabies	Until treated.
Scarlet Fever	For 24 hours after commencing antibiotics.
Tuberculosis	CCDC will advise on necessary action.
Whooping cough (pertussis)	For five days after commencing antibiotics.

The above information is based on recommendations from the Health Protection Agency www.hpa.org.uk; however it is at the playgroup leader's discretion whether to admit a child to playgroup following an illness.

