



The Ark Pre-School Parents' Survey Results 2024

Dear parents/ carers,

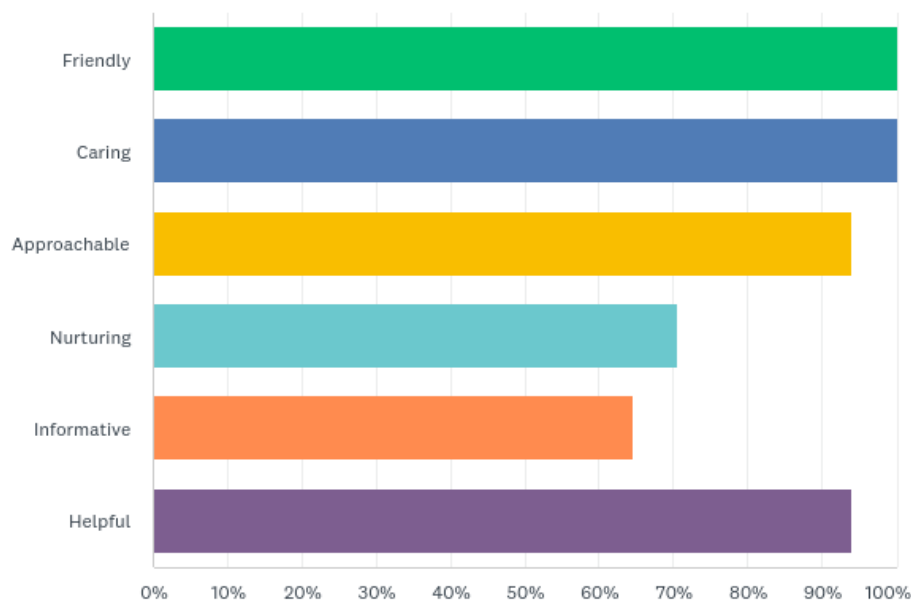
Thank you for taking the time to complete The Ark Pre-school Parent Survey. We received 17 responses to this online survey, and we really appreciate the time taken by these parents to give us your feedback. It helps us to strive to provide the best care for your children.

1) Is your child happy at the Ark?

100% of the respondents answered YES

Your comments indicated that the children love coming to The Ark and spending time with friends and all the staff team. The children especially enjoy the wide range of learning experiences and activities, and Fun in the Forest sessions are a highlight for many children.

2) How do you find the staff?



Your comments indicated that the staff are welcoming, approachable and caring. A couple of respondents commented that there is not much time to speak with staff at drop off or pick up, and others commented:

- Staff are wonderful, they make the place special.*
- The updates on Tapestry are always detailed and informative so we feel we have a good idea of what her morning has been like. We also love the photos. The staff are all very caring and friendly.*
- Every staff member is caring and attentive to childrens' needs*

3) Are you satisfied with the care we provide?

100% of the respondents answered Very Satisfied or Satisfied. One parent mentioned that they would like more feedback about how their child is settling in and anything of note that happened in the day, and another mentioned they would like the option to have full day attendance.

Another parent commented: "I am very happy and we know our child is cared for with experienced, caring, professionals who are sensitive to his needs".

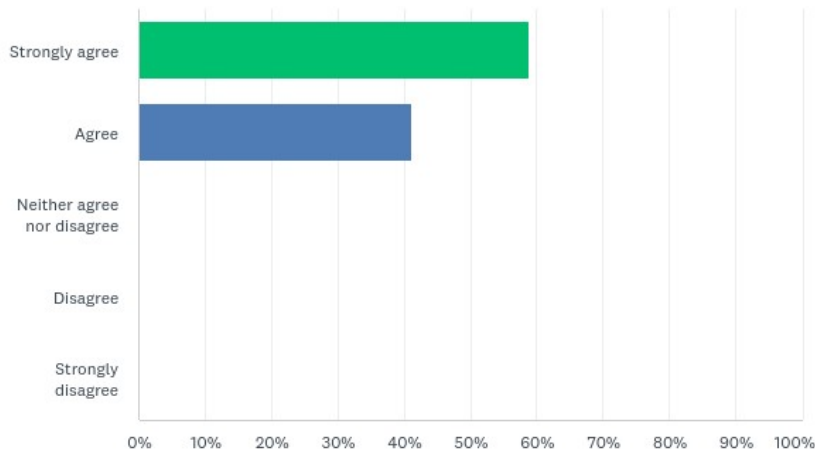
4) Are you satisfied with the level of communication received from The Ark since your child started at The Ark (including initial registration packs issued, parent consultations, regular email reminders, newsletters, website, Facebook updates)?

100% of those who responded answered YES

Comments included:

- *All the communication listed is very helpful but I would appreciate more individual communication with key workers on a more regular basis.*
- *Staff make an effort to upload photos and a comment tapestry which is nice. I appreciate this much be quite time consuming.*
- *The communication before starting was very good - the welcome pack etc. The weekly emails are really useful, as are the regular app updates - we look through the photos with our child at home and find it opens up conversation with her (whereas without them she doesn't really tell us anything about her day). I think all the communication is really helpful for working parents to feel connected to the preschool even if they can't be there in person often. A 'touch base' phone call after a few weeks of starting would've been a nice touch just to let us know how things were going just as an idea (as we aren't there for those on the door convos).*

5) My child's learning and development within the curriculum is well supported by the staff in the setting, and they are making good progress?



One respondent commented, "I can see that there are a good variety of activities on offer and the staff encourage the children to try them all." Another said, "Our daughter has needed support with social aspects of pre-school. This has been supported well overall."

6) Are you happy with the range of activities we provide?

100% of those who responded answered Very Satisfied or Satisfied.

Parents commented:

- *Great rotation of play& educational stations/areas*
- *From the communication (emails, photos) it looks like there is a good rotation of activities and coverage of different topics etc. The trips they go on are a nice addition - the option for children to attend trips that aren't on their normal days would be a lovely touch if it was feasible.*
- *My child is never bored of the activities and having visited The Ark myself during a parent session it was clear to see how many activities the kids have access to throughout their session.*

7) I am well informed about my child's progress.

90% of those who responded answered Very Satisfied or Satisfied.

One parent said they did not know how their child is progressing, and another mentioned that they would like more information on how their child is performing in relation to what would be expected for a child of their age and what she needs to work on, but mentioned that they have not yet attended a parent consultation meeting.

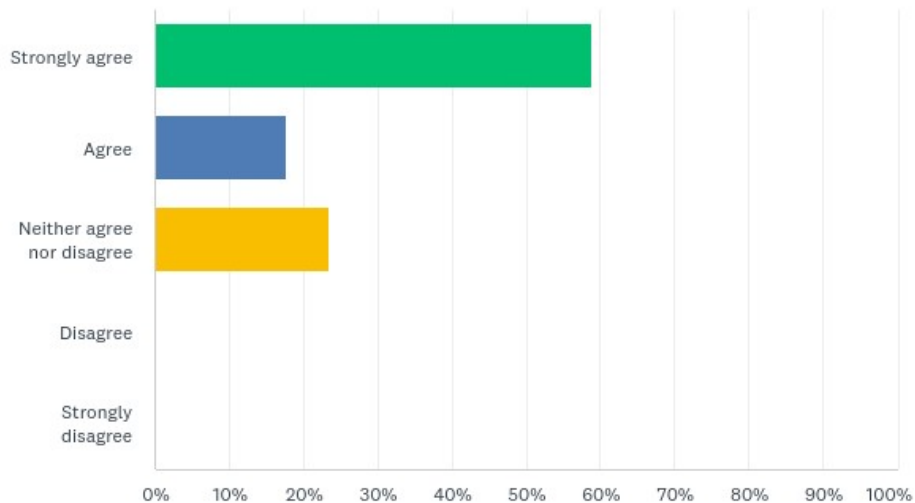
Other parents commented that they appreciate the regular Tapestry updates and the reports sent.

8) Do you feel adequately involved in the life of The Ark?

100% of the respondents answered YES

One parent wrote: *The stay and plays and events parents are invited to (sports day etc) give us the opportunity to feel involved (and not so frequent that we feel too pressurised as working parents in terms of getting time off) - although some earlier in the year would've been nice in terms of meeting other parents/ children as more seem to happen at the end of the year (and many of these children are now leaving)*

9) My child benefits from the balance between the Fun in the Forest days at Wellington, and time in The Ark setting.



The comments submitted were:

- *The activities are brilliant. However, since you'll likely be having more 2-year-olds, please consider creating an alternative activity for the very young ones while they wait to be strong enough to go on the long walks.*
- *My child only attends days at the settings*
- *Has not attended the forest sessions - I would love her to be able to broaden her experience but the days don't work with our other childcare arrangements (however I appreciate there are lots of logistics with this and you can't accommodate everyone's needs).*
- *We feel outdoor play is very important*

10) Do you have any suggestions of things we can improve, or any general feedback?

The comments submitted were:

- *Thank you - the Ark is a wonderful place! I would just appreciate more communication about how the day has gone for my child.*
- *Please, can you consider doing an afternoon session as this would benefit more working parents.*
- *I'm so pleased that I chose the ark as my preferred pre school for my little one*
- *I think you are doing a great job*
- *I would like to discuss whether Fun in the Forest days can be altered - from full morning walks to partial morning walks, potentially in the closer area of Chaucer Woods, Circle Hill Woods, the park, etc. It seems a little bit too much at the moment. Plus if the children start out from preschool, parents don't need to drive all the way to Wellington and the kids can still have a forest morning, but not the entire session.*
- *I am very happy with the care and education provided.*
- *Really impressed with the preschool and would recommend it to others.*
- *No suggestions of any improvements, it is a wonderful pre-school and my daughter is very happy here.*

Our response

Thank you to all the parents who responded; your feedback and questions are very much appreciated. We are very encouraged by the positive comments you have shared.

We are asked to review our hours of operation on an annual basis. Unfortunately, we cannot change our opening times, or add sessions or lunch clubs at this time due to the need to recruit many more staff, and use the church building for longer periods of time. The committee will continue to review this.

We decided to have two mornings at Wellington doing Forest Schooling type activities as we recognise the proven benefits of Outdoor Learning (see attached sheet for more detail). We really value our time outside, seeing the benefits for the children physically, mentally and socially. As we have a very small outdoor area we feel that our Fun in the Forest days mean the children are getting the right balance between indoor and outdoor learning. Parents are able to select days when we are not in the Forest if they feel this is better for their child. Parents are also welcome (by prior arrangement) to collect their children at 11.30am from the Byron Drive entrance to Wellington college if they do not wish their child to walk back to The Ark.

Thank you for your positive comments about Tapestry. We find that this system works well as a way to keep parents updated about their child's activities and development at The Ark, without taking too much staff time away from the children. As children are dropped off in the morning, the staff team are focussed on welcoming them and helping them settle so parents will understand that this is not an ideal time for conversations.

A couple of parents expressed that they do not know how their child is progressing in relation to their age, or what next steps for development might be - as one mentioned, this is covered in keyworker consultation meetings twice a year, but we do encourage parents to make an appointment with their child's keyworker if you would like an update between these scheduled meetings.

As mentioned, we do regularly go on trips which enhance the children's experience. When feasible, these are opened up to children who don't usually attend on this day (e.g. fire station visits, our summer outing and sports day), and we will always consider this in our planning.

We constantly review Fun in the Forest and appreciate feedback parents have shared on this. Heather has recently been able to take some of the older children on smaller trips to the Morgan Recreation ground on some mornings, to give them the space to enjoy the outside environment without it being a full morning's session.

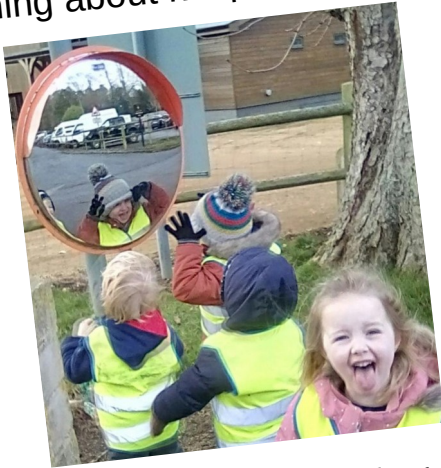
Thank you for your continued support.
The Ark Team.

Why is outdoor play important?

Images: The Ark

Notes: Nursery World/Heather Sinclair

Health, emotional well-being and self image grow when children are able to create personal challenges of the right kind and level for them, learning about keeping safe as they do so.



Interaction with the natural world develops the feeling of being part of nature, not apart from it, nurturing willing and able caretakers – it also benefits children's mental health and grows resilience.

Relationships with adults and other children: for all sorts of reasons, relationships are different outdoors, conflicts are rarer, and enjoyable conversations more common.



The outdoor world is full of interest, feeding curiosity and fascination, so that meaningful opportunities for learning, expressing and developing abound.

Learning outdoors engages and deeply involves children, satisfying their strong drive to explore and make sense of their world and cultivating important dispositions for learning.



Repetition of routes allows the children to build associations with each stop along the route (e.g. king of the castle tree stumps, dinosaur woods, pirate ship) and observe seasonal changes.

What do we do at Fun in the Forest?



Birdwatching, spotting and identifying vehicles, listening to sounds around us, problem solving, learning to assess risks, measuring with string and sticks, hunting for minibeasts, spotting seasonal and man made changes in the environment, art and craft: e.g. leaf/bark rubbing and making nature crowns, memory games, hide and seek, shadow investigations, making natural collages, splashing in puddles, and much more!

Different types of movement - climbing, sliding, running, jumping, rolling, hopping, skipping...

Imaginative play – in dens, along a jungle path,



Taking turns using equipment – binoculars, compass

Reading books, singing, snacktime

Spotting letters, shapes and numbers



Collecting natural objects (pinecones, stones, sticks, leaves) and building with them, comparing their sizes, pushing them into hard mud/soft sand.

Finding out about the world: e.g. investigating a springy branch and working together to play on it safely, bending branches, feeling textures.

