

Children with SEN and/or Disabilities: Our Proposals

The aim of this document is to enable families to see the support that they will receive for their child within our setting. We hope to reassure you that we value each child as being unique and endeavour to meet their individual needs.

About Us: We are a fully inclusive setting able to meet the needs of children with SEND. Our preschool has been operational since 1998 and we have very low staff turnover, hence considerable experience and a good working knowledge of Child Development and the EYFS. We believe our provision for young children with SEND is extremely effective and comprehensive and we have previously been involved in obtaining Educational Statementing for children prior to them starting school. We follow the SEND Code of Practice 2014 for the Early Years.

Our SENCo: Jo Yehezkel is our named SENCo and has worked in this capacity since 2002. Jo has extensive experience working with children with learning delays and difficulties. Jo works in partnership with all members of staff to ensure the effectiveness of SEN provision. She has experience of using the Picture Exchange Communication System (PECS) and a basic knowledge of Makaton. All information is shared and regularly updated with parents/carers. Our SENCo and staff have experience working with a wide range of children with differing SEN, learning delays and difficulties: children with ASD; Downs Syndrome; behaviour difficulties; severe and complex needs; visual impairment; hearing impairment; allergies; coeliac; galactosaemia; social and communication delay; speech and language delay and speech and language disorders.

Our Facilities: The building we rent is fully wheelchair accessible. The main hall is all on one level and there is a ramp into the back room. The visual environment is good with the windows at high level and curtains to prevent glare. The hall acoustics, however, are not good but we are able to use a separate room to promote good listening and develop language skills. There is a disabled access toilet and parking is available outside the building. Please note it is a public building and shared with other users.

Induction Process: All parents and children are encouraged to visit our preschool prior to starting for play sessions – we have an ‘open door’ policy for new parents to allow them to visit as often as they wish and when convenient to them. We also provide an “Open Afternoon” play session which is just for new families to help familiarise themselves with our activities and routine and share information about our “Learning Journals”. Families can also meet their key-person. A home visit is offered if required. You will be asked to fill in an Application Form which gives you an opportunity to share any known Educational need or disability, we can then discuss this with you before your child starts so we are prepared.

Supporting Children: A graduated approach is used to identify and meet children’s needs. We operate a key-person system and parents/carers are encouraged to initially speak to their child’s key-person to raise any concerns they have. The key-person has the greatest knowledge of the characteristics of their key children and their individual learning styles and stages of development. All staff are available at the beginning and end of each session to chat about any issues and we offer private meetings with families if required. Managers, SENCo and all staff work closely together to ensure that the needs of children with SEN and disabilities are identified as early as possible and that suitable provision is put in place. Differentiation is reflected in our planned activities. We will take extra steps to put strategies in place that will support the child and extend this to their home environment where needed. Your child’s key-person and SENCo will work together to ensure the environment, activities and routine support your child’s needs. They will communicate with the rest of the staff to provide consistency and understanding within our team. We may apply for extra funding from Essex County Council if we feel it is necessary for a child to have one-to-one support from an adult, and whilst we have limited funds we do have a good adult:child ratio and usually find a way to offer support if extra funding is not forthcoming.

We learn about children in many ways:

- Parents complete a “Help Us Get to Know You” form when a child starts at the preschool and there is a section for highlighting any concerns, with other questions about the child’s interests; likes; dislikes; questions about their development; their Health Visitor checks and any other Health professionals involved in their care.
- Children are also encouraged to visit for play sessions, with their parents, before starting with us, which is also a time to discuss any issues.
- During the first 3 weeks of starting the key-person completes a “starting” assessment, which helps us to gain a picture of your child’s level of development and interests.
- Each child has a Learning Journal where we keep accurate and up to date records of the child’s learning and development, based on the EYFS. The child’s Learning Journal is always available to parents/carers and regularly shared. Parents are encouraged to contribute to these records and regularly take them home to share with the child and other family members.
- We hold individual meetings with our parents to discuss their child’s development and any concerns can be raised.
- A written 2-3 year old Progress Check is produced for all our children by their key-person covering the 3 prime areas of learning, these are shared and discussed with parents.

Where a difficulty or delay is noted a range of differentiated approaches are put into place to help the child develop. Visual timetables and some Makaton are used daily. We also use “first/then”, sand timers, visual cues and backward chaining where appropriate. We use a separate room for small group games and role play activities to help/promote language and social communication development. The child’s interests and strengths are taken into account to help promote self-esteem. Where a SEN is identified an action plan is implemented and devised jointly by the keyperson, SENCo and parents. Targetted plans are formulated with clear targets and outcomes - “Assess, Plan, Do, Review”.

All action plans are devised with parents/carers (considering a child’s views/interests) and a review date set. The child’s progress is discussed and reviewed regularly with parents/carers. Staff monitor and provide appropriate support as written in the plan. Parents are involved in the decision to make external referrals which are completed jointly with parents/keyperson and SENCo. We access a variety of services including: Area SENCo; Health Visitor; Speech and Language Therapist; Children’s Centres; Specialist Teacher Team and Home Support Workers.

Child Protection: Our co-ordinator for Child Protection is Karen Blaney. We follow strict guidelines to ensure the rights and safety of children, staff and other people associated with the Preschool.

Health and Safety and Risk Assessments: The building and areas which are used by children are regularly assessed for safety. Our co-ordinator for Health and Safety is Liz Hotchkiss. Risk assessments are regularly carried out and evaluated.

Training: We have a positive approach to supporting behaviour and all staff promote and model positive behaviour. All staff have Paediatric First Aid Training and Safeguarding (All staff Level 1, Managers Level 2 and 3). We undertake relevant training courses as deemed necessary. Our SENCo has undertaken relevant training.

Administration of Medicines: We follow strict policy guidelines for administering medicines. Parents complete a “Permission Form to Administer Medicines and Asthma Inhaler”. Where necessary Parents complete an “Individual Health Plan” if their child has a medical condition requiring attention.

ENCO: Our co-ordinator for Equal opportunities is Liz Hotchkiss, she has completed relevant, current training to meet OFSTED requirements for equality and diversity and the requirements of the Equality Act 2010. The ENCO helps promote, co-ordinate and monitor equality of opportunities for children and families in our setting. We work in partnership with families, staff and volunteers to remove barriers to inclusion for children and their families.

Partnership With Parents: We pride ourselves on our strong links with Parents.

- We provide information to all families about our activities and regularly send home/email newsletters. Annually we have special focus areas on Speech and Language, with information leaflets giving advice on how to help children in this area. This usually coincides with National Reading Week which links into this area.
- We are a committee run pre-school and parents/carers are encouraged to join the committee to support the day to day running and management of the preschool. We have a parent helper rota and parents can come into preschool any morning (once their child is settled). All outings are arranged by the Management Committee and a risk assessment is carried out for all outings prior to the trip.
- The SENCo is responsible for the purchase of any equipment needed to support the learning of all children with SEND. Equipment is also borrowed from the Specialist Teacher Team via the Area SENCo. We have a high staff to child ratio and work together to provide the best support for children with SEN. Staff use the separate room for 1-1 activities and small group games/stories to support all of our children.
- If children are struggling to settle in we can be flexible with start times or duration of the session eg start later if the hussle of the morning is too much or the session is too long.

Transition: We always endeavour to obtain information about a child who has moved to us from another setting. We work closely with our local primary school – Thaxted – and have a good relationship with all of the local schools our children attend. Indeed our SENCo has previously worked at Thaxted Primary School in a SEN capacity and thus has a good understanding of the school routine and facilities. With parent’s permission we share Development Records with schools. Before children leave for primary schools we offer a range of activities designed to help with transition:

- An outing to the primary school with staff
- Teachers come to our setting to meet the children
- Share photos of routines and facilities
- Provide dressing up activities with school uniform
- Provide extra visits to primary school with SENCo or keyperson if deemed necessary
- Meet with primary school SENCo and parents if appropriate.