

Guide to Special Educational Needs

This leaflet explains how we can work in partnership to support children with Special Educational Needs (SEN)

Introduction

In our Pre-school there will be children who may at some time have Special Educational Needs. For example, they may have problems with communication, or need support with behavioural, emotional or physical difficulties (e.g. visual, speech, or hearing).

Our Pre-school has a responsibility to monitor all children's progress, through regular ongoing assessments, and where there are concerns, to take steps to help children learn more effectively.

Although additional support from an adult is sometimes appropriate, there are also other ways to help children with SEN e.g. special scissors, pencil grips, visual timetable or more specialist equipment.

If this support does not meet your child's needs, then your child's key person will discuss the concerns with the Special Educational Needs Co-ordinators (SENCo), Marian and Kerry, and they will arrange to meet with you to discuss the Pre-school's and your concerns.

What is Special Educational Needs Support?

If your child needs further support which is extra to or different from help given to other children, then we will inform you. This extra help is called *Early Years Action*.

At this time, the Key person will write an Individual Education Plan (IEP), following our initial meeting with you. This will include targets for your child to progress towards, and a date for reviewing this progress.

What is an Individual Education Plan?

An IEP is written for a child with Special Educational Needs, after consultation with relevant staff, you and your child. It is used to plan experiences, teach and review your child's progress.

It should be written in clear language so that it is easy for you and anyone else to read and understand. It should focus on up to three or four achievable targets set to help meet your child's needs.

The IEP is reviewed regularly by the Pre-school. We will involve you in the process and you will receive a copy of the current IEP.

We recognise that support will change according to your child's needs. Your child may make good progress and then no longer need support. However, your child may need further support at Early Years Action or the SENCo may wish to seek advice from professionals outside the Pre-school to ensure that your child's needs are being addressed.

If this is the case, you will be consulted, and you will be able to meet with the outside agency concerned. E.g. if your child is having difficulties with speech and communication, a referral may be made to the Speech and Language Therapy Service (SLT), and you will be invited to share your views. This kind of help is called **Early Years Action Plus**, and advice is sought from outside professionals which can be used to help decide the targets for your child's IEP.

This support may be sufficient to meet your child's needs and they can either remain at Early Years Action Plus or your child may make good progress and no longer need support at this level.

However, if your child is not making adequate progress at Early Years Action Plus, further assessment may be required. In discussion with you, the key person, the SENCo and other professionals involved, it may be appropriate to make a request to the local authority for a '**statutory assessment**'.

The Local Authority will consider all reports, and then decide whether a Statement of Special Educational Needs would benefit your child's future education.

What can you do if you have concerns about your child's development?

Your child's key person is the first person you should talk to if you have concerns about your child's progress at the Pre-school. Think carefully before you meet, make some notes about the things you would like to tell your child's key person, and plan the questions you would like to ask. You might like to have your child's hearing and eye sight checked before you meet.

You can use this check list to help you:

- What does your child enjoy doing?
- What are your child's strengths?
- What are your concerns?

- How does your child feel about coming to Pre-school?
- Does anyone else in your family have similar difficulties?
- Have you any concerns about your child's health?
- Have you had any support for your child's needs from anywhere else?
- Is there anything happening at home that could be bothering your child?
- What is your child's behaviour like at home?

What questions should you ask?

Do you have concerns about my child?

There may be areas of concern at Pre-school which you are not aware of, and vice versa. The concerns could be related to their developmental progress in Pre-school or about your child getting on with other children.

What evidence is there to support these concerns?

Ask for evidence, which may be observations, results of assessments, or reports of incidents. Give your opinions, but listen carefully.

What has been done so far to help my child?

Ask what has been done, how often, and what difference the support has made. Help the Pre-school by making suggestions, but be realistic!

Will my child always need extra help?

Sometimes a child will need help for a short time only. Some children will need help throughout their time in Pre-school. Keep talking – you need to work together.

What if you disagree with the Pre-school?

Talk to your child's key person again

Talk with the SENCo's (Marian and Kerry)

Ask for a copy of the Pre-school's SEN policy

Contact the Parent Partnership Service for advice

How can you help your child?

- Ask for suggestions of activities you could do with your child at home
- Let your child know that home and Pre-school are working together
- Do have fun together – e.g. go swimming, to the library, the cinema, the shops.
- Share books, magazines, comics and newspapers with your child – read to them regularly.
- Have conversations which help your child talk and listen – play around with words and ideas – e.g. I spy, Minister's Cat
- Celebrate your child's strengths – let your child know that you are proud of them and reassure them that you will support them

Where can you go if you need further information and support?

- Pre-school SEN Policy
- Accessibility Plan
- Family Information Service – www.shropshire.gov.uk
- Children's Centre Services – 01691-624086