**SEN – Local Offer**

1. How does the early years setting know if children need extra help and what should I do if I think my child may have special educational needs or disabilities?

When initially joining playgroup parents will have the opportunity to talk to the play leader and voice any concerns they may already have. Once in the setting all staff observe and monitor the child during their settling in period and ongoing throughout their time with us. Your child will be allocated a keyworker who will be responsible for monitoring and documenting your child's progress and if any issues arise they will highlight any concerns to the play leader and the Special Educational Needs Coordinator in the setting (SENco). The keyworker and the SENco will continue to observe the child with particular focus on the area of concern. Parents at all times will be kept informed of any concerns and any strategies in progress to deal with concerns. If appropriate and with parents’ consent further help may be obtained from outside professionals e.g. FIRST team (Facilitating Inclusion Reflection Support and Training), Health Visitors. Or you may be guided towards support sessions available e.g. speech therapy drop in clinics.

2. How will the early years setting staff support my child?

Your child will be allocated a keyworker who will monitor and document your

child's progress throughout their time with us following the EYFS (Early Years Foundation Stage) areas of development. It is the keyworker who will highlight areas your child can progress in and how through their play they will achieve these “next steps”. This will be documented in the child's learning journal which will be available to you at all times. More formal meetings between yourself and your child's keyworker can be arranged if necessary. All staff in the setting will work with the child to try to move them through their next steps.

The SENco works alongside other staff as part of the team, if there is an area where progress is not being made your child will continue to be monitored (often children reach individual targets at different rates so they may reach their next steps without intervention.) If it is deemed appropriate the SENco will work with yourself and your child's keyworker to develop a “play plan” which details strategies in areas of play which will encourage your child to progress. This will be shared with other members of staff so that they can all work with your child following the same strategies. The plan will be shared with yourself so that you may be able to continue the same strategies during your child's play at home.

3. How will the curriculum be matched to my child's needs?

Keyworkers take into account each child's individual needs by a process of observation and utilising these observations along with their professional judgement to complete progress review sheets and following these creating “next steps” for each child. They also consider which activities may be best suited to help each child achieve their next steps. Staff attend regular staff meetings where as a team it is discussed how we will meet the needs of all children in the setting via a programme of activities following from a main topic e.g. the weather, people who help us etc. The activities are centred around the areas of learning set out in the EYFS. We are also very child led in our approach and our planning is flexible to ensure that the children's interests are catered for. Your child's progress review sheets and next step sheets will be located in their learning journals which are kept in the setting and can be accessed by yourselves at any time. Staff will be available to discuss these in more detail with you should this be required.

4. How will both you and I know how my child is doing and how will you help me to support my child's learning?

We like to think that we are very approachable and would encourage parents to discuss with us at any time any issues or concerns they may have about their child's progress. Keyworkers can also be available for more formal prearranged discussions when required. We encourage parents to be as involved as possible with the playgroup and parents are invited to sign up for a parent rota to play with their child in the setting and see first-hand what happens during a morning session. This can be invaluable to see how your child is settling in and any issues that may be arising. It is also an opportunity to get to know members of staff better. We also hold Special days in playgroup once a term where parents are invited in, during these learning journals are put out for parents to view and Keyworkers and other staff members are on hand to discuss any concerns. This is also a chance to get to know staff better and also chat with other parents.

5. What support will there be for my child's overall well-being?

All children within our setting are valued as individuals and their needs are planned for accordingly. We value children's opinions and will ensure that we take these into consideration when planning for your child. We have policies in place concerning the administration of any medicines your child may need while they are with us as well as policies for nappy changing. These are available to view on request. We have a disabled toilet on the premises and for children with physical needs we have obtained the advice of occupational therapists to determine how best to provide their personal care needs.

We have a safeguarding policy and all staff are very aware at all times of the safety of children in our setting. The building is locked while playgroup is in session and we are continuously risk assessing activities and events that may be held. All staff hold a current DBS check.

We keep a record of attendance levels and although there are no compulsory attendance requirements for children of preschool age we will liaise with parents regarding the appropriate number of sessions that each child attends for taking into account the parents’ wishes and the needs of the child.

We have a behaviour policy in place and will discuss with parents any issues arising with regards to behaviour. If appropriate, keyworkers can work with parents to put strategies in place to positively reinforce good behaviour and remove any situations which may be causing behaviour to escalate.

6. What specialist services and expertise are available at or accessed by the early years setting?

Within our setting we have staff with many years of experience dealing with many different types of educational and behavioural issues that children may present with. In the first instance we will utilise our knowledge and experience to set up play plans and using a variety of tools available to us try to work out the areas a child may have a delay or problem in and encourage them to progress. At all times parents will be kept informed of any issues we have highlighted and strategies we are using to help the child overcome these issues. If we are not seeing progress over a period of time we may seek advice from Targeted Setting Support (TSS) a service offered to early years settings, who after looking at the strategies we have already put into place may come into the setting to advise and assist us to implement further strategies that may have a positive impact.

For children with SEND in our care we have also had regular contact and advice from Speech Therapists, Physiotherapists, Occupational Therapists, Educational psychologists and Portage dependant on the child's current issues. We are happy to meet with professionals out of the setting or often have these professionals visit the setting to work with both us and the child. We are keen to ensure all children gain the best experience from their time at playgroup and value any input from outside agencies and professionals to assist us.

7. What training are the staff, supporting children with SEND, had or are having?

The majority of our staff are trained to NVQ level 3. At all sessions at least one member of staff holds a current first aid certificate.

The SENco in the setting has attended the relevant West Sussex SENco training and attends termly network meetings to keep updated on policies and procedures. She has recently attended a 2 day course run by speech therapists in response to a number of children in the setting who have some speech difficulties and delays.

We are keen to attend training to help us with any specific issues children in our setting may have. For example we have recently accompanied one child and his mum to a support group catering for his physical needs in order to learn more about the work he does there.

8. How will my child be included in activities outside the early years setting including trips?

We are continuously monitoring the suitability of activities both in and out of the setting for all children and spend a lot of time considering the appropriateness and accessibility of any trips or outside events in order that all parents and children will be able to join in if they wish. Ultimately the location of our main summer outing is decided by our parent committee which all parents have the opportunity to join and participate in the decision process. Parents attend this outing so each child has at least one adult with them. Staff also attend providing extra support and input. Details of any outings are provided to parents in advance and parents are welcome to approach us with any concerns they may have.

9. How accessible is the early years setting environment? (indoors and outdoors)

We are located in a community building in the middle of a park. Our building is all on one level enabling access to wheel chairs and push chairs. There is a disabled access toilet towards the back of the building. For children with complex physical needs we have obtained advice from occupational therapists concerning the best way to cater for individual children's personal needs. Any equipment needed for children with SEND have been obtained for specific children via liaison with TSS prior to the child starting with us. We visited with parents, the child and TSS team at home in order to determine what equipment would be needed.

For parents with English as an additional language we try to ensure all information is passed to them in a way that they understand. This may mean translating newsletters into the appropriate language or obtaining a family member to translate or a professional translator. We use visual pictures and prompts to aid children who have English as a second language and communicate as much as possible with parents to ensure we are able to understand the child's day to day needs.

10. How will the early years setting prepare and support my child to join the early years setting, transfer to a new setting/school?

As a new parent and child to the setting you will be invited to come and stay with your child for one or more sessions prior to them starting. This is so your child and yourself can become familiar with us and our routines. We are very flexible about this and have an open door policy meaning you can just turn up to a session without prior arrangement.

You will have the chance prior to your child starting to talk to the play leader and get to know the staff that will be working with your child.

If your child requires it we are happy for you to stay with them during their initial sessions once they have started. For some children we have done a phased leaving where the child is left for gradually longer periods of time making the adjustment for the child and the parents easier.

If you are already aware your child has SEND please speak to the play leader or the SENco. We are happy to discuss in detail the needs of your child and if necessary can arrange from input from the TSS team for a pre-entry visit with you at home prior to your child starting in order to get as prepared as possible.

When it is time for your child to move to “big school” or another early years setting we realise the importance of liaising with their next setting as much as possible in order to make the transition stress free. For children with SEND this will involve meetings with the new setting and parents to discuss what the child's needs are and how they have been catered for at our setting. The child's new setting will if appropriate be invited into playgroup to visit the child. We are able to accompany the child on visits to the new school or setting should this be necessary.

At playgroup in the summer term we run afternoon sessions specifically for the children going up to “big school”. During these sessions we discuss and do lots of activities to prepare them for this transition. We can also provide extra aids such as photo books of their new setting to help the children prepare for this next step.

11. How are the early years settings resources allocated and matched to children's special educational needs?

Before your child starts playgroup we will discuss the days that you would like your child to attend and discuss which we think would be most suitable. It may be that we have a session with high attendance and this may not be conducive to your child’s needs.

We have a high child:staff ratio, and if required and where finances allow will have extra staff working when your child attends. This enables your child’s keyworker/SENco to spend some time during the morning with your child on a 1:1 basis. Depending on your child’s needs it may be possible for us to apply for additional funding to employ a staff member on a 1:1 basis.

We will also assess the toys and equipment we have for suitability. We will then ensure equipment matches your child’s age/ability. We are also members of the local toy library and can borrow suitable toys from them as well as applying for specific equipment relating to your child’s needs.

12. How is the decision made about what type and how much support my child will receive?

Your child's keyworker and the SENco will work with yourself to determine the level of support your child needs. Your child's keyworker will discuss with you any issues or concerns we have and you will have the opportunity input into a play plan devised by the keyworker or SENco which will highlight areas of play that your child enjoys and devise strategies that can be implemented into that play to help your child progress. You will be able to have a copy of this plan to continue with the strategies at home if you wish. This plan is reviewed half termly with yourself where it will be determined if the strategies are having a positive impact. Following this a new plan may be implemented or continuation of the old plan as appropriate. If further support is required with your consent the setting may contact the TSS team in order to gain further advice on how to help your child get the best experience possible while at playgroup.

13. How are the parents involved in the early years setting? How can I be involved?

We have many ways that parents can be involved in playgroup. We are run by a parent committee which all parents are able to join. This meets approximately once a term and discusses and makes decisions on various playgroup issues. Meetings are informal and it is a good way to get to know the playgroup and other parents.

Once a term we hold a special event where mums/dads and carers are invited into playgroup – autumn treasure hunt in the autumn term, mothers day tea in the spring term and sports day and summer outing in the summer term. This is a chance to meet other parents and the staff and spend some time with your child in the setting.

We have a parent rota where parents/carers are invited to sign up to join us for a particular session. During the session you can spend time with your own child, play with the other children or merely watch if you are more comfortable doing so.

14. Who can I contact for further information?

For more information about playgroup please contact the play leader Maria Jenner: 07745 217059

The SENco at playgroup is Claire Browning and she can also be contacted on the playgroup mobile number: 07745 217059. We are often busy with children so please leave a message.

Both Maria and Claire are happy to discuss any concerns you may have about choosing a playgroup, and starting with us and any issues related to Special Educational Needs.

Other areas where more information about early years settings and support can be obtained are the local children and family centres in Burgess Hill these are located at: The Gattons Children and Family Centre  
Royal George Road  
Burgess Hill  
West Sussex  
RH15 9SL

Phone: 01444 255480

And: Sidney West Children and Family Centre  
Leylands Road  
Burgess Hill  
West Sussex  
RH15 8HS

Phone: 01444 255493