

Special Needs and Inclusion Policy

Principle

The Disability Discrimination Act 1995 describes disability as '*a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long term adverse effect on a person's ability to carry out normal day to day activities*'.

Article 23 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child states '*...disabled child should enjoy a full and decent life in conditions which ensure dignity, promote self-reliance and facilitate the child's active participation in the community.*'

Introduction

Rainbow Stop Playgroup promotes the development and education of all children under statutory school age in a parent involving, community based group. We work to provide a safe, secure and stimulating environment which ensures equality of opportunity for all children and their families. We provide access for all children to a broad and balance child led curricular experience which is tailored to the learning needs of each individual child. At Rainbow Stop we believe that every child should develop to their full potential while being educated alongside their peers. This is reflected in the individual care and attention each child receives both from their personal key worker and all staff members. We work in partnership with parents to minimise barriers to learning.

Aims & Objectives

Rainbow Stop Playgroup welcomes all children and aims to provide appropriate learning opportunities for them. At Rainbow Stop we:

- Celebrate children's differences and diversity, operating an Equal Opportunities Policy ensuring no child is treated less favourably than another.
- Take reasonable steps to ensure that a child's inclusion is compatible with the efficient education of other children.
- Work in partnership with parents whose role as their child's first educator will be greatly valued.
- Identify Special Educational Needs as early as possible.
- Regularly monitor, evaluate and review our SEN provision.
- Liaise with other professionals to help us effectively meet the needs of children with difficulties.
- Provide the resources necessary to support children with SEN, including adapting the environment and activities to meet individual needs.
- Have high but realistic expectations of our children.
- Help children to develop their full potential socially, emotionally, physically and intellectually while nurturing a positive self-image and self-confidence.
- Enable children to be active learners.
- Promote a sense of belonging and community.

Definitions of SEN and Disability

Definition of SEN

The term 'Special Educational Need' is defined in legislation as '**a learning difficulty which calls for special educational provision to be made**'. A child has a *learning difficulty* if he has significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of children of his age and/or has a disability which either prevents or hinders him from making use of educational facilities generally provided for children of his age in ordinary schools. (*Code of Practice on the Identification and Assessment of Special Educational Needs 1998: Par 1.4*)

Definition of Disability

"Someone who has a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long term adverse effect on his/her ability to carry out normal day to day activities" Part 1 of Disability Discrimination Act 1995

Management of SEN within the Policy

Roles and Responsibilities

In working towards best practice identified in the Education (NI) Order 1996 and the Code of Practice on the Identification and Assessment of Special Educational Needs 1998 we as a non-statutory setting have decided upon the following roles and responsibilities:

Committee

The Playgroup Committee will co-operate with the Leader to:

- Determine the SEN policy and approach
- Establish appropriate staffing and funding arrangements
- Maintain a general oversight of the Playgroup's work in relation to SEN
- Ensure all relevant legislation is upheld

Playgroup Leader as the SENco

The leader will:

- Have responsibility for the day to day operation of the playgroup's SEN policy
- Keep the SEN policy under regular review
- Co-ordinate SEN/Disability provision through planning and delivery
- Maintain the SEN/Disability register and the records on pupils with SEN/Disability
- Report regularly to the Committee regarding SEN matters within the setting
- Listen to the voice of the child with SEN
- Liaise with parents of children with SEN to provide optimum support for the child
- Respond to requests for advice from other staff
- Identify staff training needs and act upon this
- Lead the sharing of this new learning with the team
- Liaise with external agencies

Staff

Staff will work to provide the best possible support for children with SEN by:

- Providing nurturing support through the key worker system
- Identifying barriers to learning early
- Assessing the needs of the child and keep careful records
- Planning and implementing appropriate Individual Education Plans (IEP)

- Monitoring and reviewing the child's progress
- Seek advice from professionals outside the setting in consultation with the parents/carers
- Working in partnership with parents/carers and the child
- Attending training and developing their professionalism
- Activate and share new learning within the team

Children

We encourage our children to:

- Be active in their own learning
- Build their individual sense of self-esteem and confidence
- Express their thoughts, feelings and opinions in all matters relating to them

Parents

As a parent-involving, community based group we will:

- Foster an atmosphere in which partnership between parents/carer and staff can flourish
- Keep the parent/carer at the heart of our SEN work, taking into account and respecting their wishes, feelings and knowledge in all matters regarding their child
- Operate an open door policy for parents/carers to discuss concerns and offer individual appointments which can be arranged with the Leader
- Help parents to access the information we provide
- Be sensitive to the needs of a parent/carer in understanding the processes and plans designed to support their child
- Keep records of all meetings with parents/carers when the child's progress is being discussed
- Ensure parents have access to records concerning their child and contribute to the IEP process
- Ensure parents have access to our SEN policy

Others

As a community based group we encourage people from outside our setting to enrich the children's learning experiences as part of our planned programme. All such visitors will be expected to have regard for this SEN policy as they interact within the setting.

Admissions

Our Playgroup is open to every family in the community. We aim to provide a welcome and stimulating learning environment for all children. We operate an Equal Opportunities policy and our admissions arrangements for children with SEN are consistent with the setting's general arrangements for all other children. Where a child has a statement of SEN we will work with other services and agencies regarding admissions. Together we will take into account the wishes of the parent/carer, the suitability for the child and the provision for other children. This is in line with SENDO legislation.

Special Facilities/Resources

Equipment

We have a good range of equipment including; Dark den, tactile materials, treasure baskets, noise maker, bubble tube, light table, sensory light kits and easy grip tweezers.

Access

- Easy access both indoors and outdoors
- Spacious playroom enabling easy access to all activities
- Quiet room with den area
- Neutral calming décor
- Accessible toilet
- Meeting room for consultation with parents and other professionals

Reference to other relevant policies

We have a range of other policies to support our work with children with SEN namely:

- Child Protection
- Equal Opportunities
- Positive Behaviour
- Admissions
- Anti-Bullying
- Complaints
- Confidentiality
- Health & Safety
- Intimate Care
- Observation & Record Keeping
- Outdoor Play
- Outings
- Parental Involvement
- Pastoral Care
- Food & Drink
- Provision, Maintenance & Replacement of Play Equipment
- Settling In

Complaints Procedure Relating to SEN Procedures

Parents may contact Victoria the Playgroup Leader on 02837551085 regarding any SEN comments, issues or complaints. Alternatively you can contact Tracey the Chairperson of the Management Committee.

Identification, Provision, Monitoring and Evaluation of SEN Procedures

Identification

We seek to identify children with SEN as early as possible through our professional judgement backed up by our observations and assessments. We also take into account information provided by parents and external agencies. With our playgroup we work within the best practice guidance provided in the five stage approach outlined in *The Code of Practice on the Identification and Assessment of Special Educational Needs*.

Provision at Stages 1-3 of the Code of Practice

Stage 1:

When staff identify a concern this is discussed initially with the SENCo. She then helps gather information and assess the child's needs. Following this the SENCo will speak to the parent/carer and share this concern, explaining how the concern is presenting and outlines the support which will be put in place for the child. With parental permission the child's name will be placed on the SEN register. This records the child's name, date of birth, type of SEN, date and stage of support made available.

Stage 2:

The SENCo takes the lead responsibility for co-ordinating the child's SEN provision working in partnership with the staff team and family. We will seek parental permission to place the child's name on Stage 2 of the Code of Practice. An IEP is written and implemented detailing the provision of support being put in place. It is then monitored and reviewed. A decision is taken regarding the next level of support required to meet the need. The SENCo will ensure the child accesses an inclusive curriculum which also provides specific nurturing support.

Stage 3:

If required Stage 3 support will be given following Stage 2 review. The Staff and the SENCo continue to work together providing support but take advice from external agencies supporting the child such as Speech and Language Therapy. With parental permission the child's name is registered as Stage 3 on the Code of Practice. Staff work to integrate components of these specialist programmes into the daily learning opportunities they provide for the child as part of the IEP process. Again this is monitored and reviewed. A decision is taken regarding the next level of support required to meet the need.

Provision at Stages 4 and 5 of the Code of Practice

Stage 4:

At this stage an application is considered for a statutory assessment and if appropriate a multi-disciplinary assessment is made. With parental permission the child's name is registered as Stage 4 on the Code of Practice. The SENCo may be involved in supporting the information gathering process being undertaken. The SENCo ensures the optimum provision which can be given to meet the child's needs is maintained throughout the implementation of the Stage 4 IEP.

Stage 5:

At this stage following assessment by the Educational Psychology Service the need for a statement of Special Educational Need is considered by the Board. If appropriate a statement is given which details the additional support provision which is recommended for the child. The setting will implement the recommendations regularly monitoring and reviewing provision.

Record Keeping

Rainbow Stop Playgroup maintains SEN information in an SEN file. This contains the SEN register, current and previous IEP's for each child, copies of Statements of SEN and multi-agency reports. We

recognise that these details are personal to children and their families and ensure confidentiality is maintained. We update our register as required. Additionally we keep records of any SEN staff audits we carry out along with a record of training attended and how it was disseminated. Within this file we keep a record of external support services available.

Monitoring Progress of Children with SEN

We regularly monitor IEP targets we set for children to ensure progression and carefully observe how they are working towards them. This helps inform our future planning for the child.

Evaluation of our Procedures for SEN

As professionals we consider the extent to which the quality of our provision for children with SEN has impacted positively in their learning and strive to address any identified aspects.

Professional Development and Partnerships

Professional Development

The Management Committee in consultation with the Playgroup Leader ensure all staff receive the necessary training and opportunities to activate and share knowledge to effectively support children with SEN.

Qualification and Experience of our Staff

We have completed further training in:

- The building blocks of Child Development
- The Code of Practice
- Parental Engagement
- Language and Communication
- Individual Education Plans
- Transitions
- Leadership and Management of SEN and Inclusion

Partnerships

At Rainbow Stop Playgroup we work in partnership with others to ensure the best for all our children. These partnerships include:

- Parent/carer
- Health professionals e.g. Health Visitors, SALT, OT, Physio and Clinical Psychologists
- Social Services e.g. Early Year Team
- Educational authorities e.g. Educational Psychology Service, Inclusion and Diversity Service, Early Years SEN Building Capacity Team (NEELB)
- Voluntary agencies e.g. Disability Action, Barnardo's, Deaf Association, Royal National Institute for the Blind, Autism NI.

Links with Other Educational Establishments and Transition Arrangements

When specific information relating to individual children needs to be forwarded to the receiving school the Leader will seek parental permission for copies of appropriate records to be shared. The Leader will meet the Year 1 teachers to help ensure a smooth and effective transition process.

The Management Committee will ensure that our SEN Policy is implemented and assess its effectiveness. They will review this policy annually, taking into account relevant legislation.

Signed:

Position:

Date:

Rainbow Stop Playgroup aim to have regard for the Code of Practice on the identification and assessment of Special Educational Needs.

- All children including children with special educational needs will be admitted to the Playgroup following consultation with parents and the Playgroup leader.
- The Playgroup's systems of observing, assessing and recording enables staff to monitor closely all children's needs and progress on an individual basis.
- The key worker system enables staff to identify specific needs and where possible works on a one to one basis with children identified. We will consult closely with parents and we believe in implementing early intervention strategies when a special need is identified.
- If a special need is identified the Playgroup will endeavour to seek funding to employ any additional qualified staff necessary to meet the needs of children attending the group.

Rainbow Stop Playgroup have developed links with a variety of external agencies to enable them to provide appropriate early intervention strategies. These include:

- Health Visitor.
- Educational Psychologist.
- Disability Team.
- Physiotherapists.
- Speech and Language Therapists.
- Occupational Therapists.

If Rainbow Stop identify the need for additional support for Speech and Language due to children's development targets we are able to make the referrals directly between playgroup and SALT. Parents/carers will always be involved and informed of children's development progress and we will seek consent from parents/carers before making any referrals.