

EVERY CHILD, EVERY SETTING

ORDINARILY AVAILABLE PROVISION IN EARLY YEARS



**A guide for Early Years providers in
Sutton**



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INTRODUCTION

In Sutton, we believe that every child deserves a joyful, engaging, and nurturing start to life through high-quality early years provision. Whether a child is with a childminder, in a preschool, nursery, or school, they should experience a setting where they feel safe, curious, valued, and supported to thrive.

In Sutton, we are committed to ensuring that all children and families, including those with SEND, have positive experiences in early years settings. Our ambition is that wherever they live in the borough, children's additional learning needs are recognised early and met effectively—within inclusive, welcoming environments that are part of their own communities.

For most children, attending their local setting with other children from their community is the best way to ensure this happens. To achieve this settings must have a core offer that meets the needs of all children, including those with SEND. This universal core offer is referred to as the ordinarily available provision. It is the range of activities, opportunities and strategies that are offered as good basic practice to meet a range of additional needs without the need for a formal diagnosis or specialist support.



Glaisdale Nursery

SUTTON'S VISION AND SEND CHARTER

We are collectively ambitious for our children and young people. Together we want to provide them with the best chances to achieve their best outcomes in life, whatever their starting point, and to prepare them effectively for adulthood.

Our SEND Charter

The Sutton Charter provides a framework for shared values and attitudes across the local area. The charter has been consulted upon with schools, services, parents/carers and representative parent/carer organisations. The Charter will be used as one of the benchmarks to measure the success of the local SEND offer, gathering feedback against the areas shown below and reporting this to the relevant overseeing bodies.

Our SEND Charter Principles are that we:

- Welcome and Care
- Value and Include
- Communicate
- Work in Partnership, developing and nurturing each of these to build
- Trust

Read more about each principle [here](#).



Tilly's Preschool

EVERY CHILD, EVERY SETTING



At the heart of every setting in Sutton is a commitment to creating a truly inclusive environment where every child, including those with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND), feels valued, respected, and empowered to reach their full potential. The following expectations have been identified collaboratively by head teachers across Sutton schools.

- **Good teaching for all is good teaching for pupils with SEND:** For all learners, including those with SEND and additional needs, high-quality teaching based on evidence informed research, is the most impactful intervention they will receive during their time in education.
- **Children should be able to attend their local school:** According to the Code of Practice (2015) there is an assumption of mainstream education for pupils with SEND and it is expected that Sutton schools will promote this for the majority of children and young people.

- **Graduated Approach:** We utilise the SEND graduated approach (assess, plan, do, review) to build a holistic understanding of pupils' needs and provide targeted support. Only once the graduated response has been exhausted and there is strong evidence that a pupil requires support above what could be made ordinarily available should an Education, Health and Care Needs Assessment be completed.
- **Inclusivity and Equity:** Inclusivity and equity is at the core of our educational provision, embedding equity of opportunity and promoting progress and attainment for all pupils.
- **Respect and Value:** We foster warm, welcoming, safe and respectful environments where everyone feels included and valued, allowing us to promote equality and challenge discrimination.

- **Partnership with Parents and carers** : We value the voice of parents and carers are committed to working in partnership to ensure the best possible outcomes. It is the responsibility of the school to ensure that parents and carers are aware of what is available for pupils at the SEN Support level. Schools will aim to instil confidence in parents and carers about the value of high quality teaching and universal/targeted provision within their schools.
- **Embracing Neurodiversity**: Our focus is on capitalising on individual strengths and interests, adapting our approach to support unique learning styles. We view neurodiversity, such as ASD and ADHD, as a valuable part of all our communities.
- **Preparation for adulthood from the earliest years**: We know all parents and carers wish for their children to go on to become healthy, happy adults who make a positive contribution to society. Planning of teaching and additional provision is therefore focused on the development of independent learning and life skills from the Early Years in collaboration with parents/carers. This means that approaches which lead to over reliance on adults and limit the independence of children are used in a limited way e.g. one to one support, support staff deployed to pupils rather than to deliver interventions.
- **Points of transition require planning and adjustment**: Support ahead of transitions should be planned well in advance.
- **Sutton settings work together**: To share good practice and to support one another in an ongoing cycle of improvement working closely with leaders across LBS and Cognus.



USING THIS DOCUMENT

WHAT IS THIS GUIDANCE FOR?

In Sutton, we believe that every child deserves the very best start in life and high-quality early education. Whether a child is with a childminder, in a preschool, nursery, or school, they should experience an inclusive environment where they feel safe, engaged, and supported to thrive.

To achieve this, all Early Years settings must provide a strong and consistent foundation of support for every child. This is known as ordinarily available provision—the strategies, adaptations, and inclusive practices that should be part of everyday, high-quality provision in all settings. It is designed to meet the broad and varied needs of all children, including those with emerging or identified special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), without the need for a formal diagnosis or additional specialist input.

The Early Years Ordinarily Available Provision Guidance has been developed to help families, settings, and professionals understand what this support looks like in practice and reflects national expectations for inclusive, high-quality early years education.

HOW HAS THIS GUIDANCE BEEN CREATED?

This guidance has been created by the Early Years SEND Team co-produced with Early Years SENCOs, in collaboration with professionals and services who also support children in the early years. It is grounded in real-world practice and shaped by those who know children best. *Thank you to settings who have shared images with us which are presented throughout.*



Jancett Stanley Park

WHO SHOULD READ THIS DOCUMENT?

This document is intended for Early Years Settings, including schools, PVI settings, and childminders. It outlines the responsibility of settings to implement a Graduated Response, which involves an Assess, Plan, Do, Review cycle to support children with, or who may have, special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).

Everyone within a setting is accountable for supporting children with SEND and embedding inclusive practices. This guide aims to assist you in achieving these goals. Additionally, it is designed to empower parents and carers to confidently support their child at home in a complementary manner.

If, after trying the strategies suggested in this document, you feel you need further advice and support you should complete an Early Years SEND Request for Support form.



Glaisdale Nursery

WHAT IS IN THE GUIDANCE?

Clear, simple, and effective strategies: These strategies are designed to be easily followed by all practitioners and parents, without requiring prior specialist training. They can be implemented as soon as a child's needs are identified, even before specialist support is requested or while awaiting a specialist visit.

Information about SEND: For each area of need, the document details the types of SEND you may observe in the children you support.

Information about the graduated response: Provisions at the whole setting, enhanced, and targeted levels, all considered ordinarily available.

Resources for parents: There are resources to help parents meet their child's needs at home, along with links for additional support.

WHAT IS ORDINARILY AVAILABLE PROVISION?

Ordinarily Available Provision (OAP) is an integral part of high-quality Early Years practice. It refers to the consistent strategies, approaches, and interventions that all Early Years settings should have in place to support the development, learning, and wellbeing of every child.

OAP ensures that inclusive, responsive teaching is embedded in day-to-day practice and that children with emerging or identified special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are supported effectively from the earliest stage.



Barrow Hedges Nursery

These approaches do not require a formal diagnosis or additional funding—they are part of what should be ordinarily available to all children as a matter of good practice.

OAP forms the foundation of the Graduated Approach, supporting practitioners to observe, assess, plan, and review how well individual needs are being met. Through this cycle, settings can identify where a child may benefit from additional or different support, and make timely, informed decisions in partnership with families and other professionals.

By embedding OAP within high-quality teaching, settings can ensure that all children—including those with SEND—have access to an inclusive environment that recognises their unique strengths, responds to their needs.

HIGH QUALITY TEACHING

Sometimes known as Quality First Teaching

High-quality teaching is the foundation of inclusive Early Years practice. It involves delivering the curriculum in a way that is engaging, responsive, and developmentally appropriate for all children, including those with SEND.

Under the SEND Code of Practice (2015), the Equality Act (2010), and the Statutory Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) framework, Early Years settings are expected to use their best endeavours to provide inclusive education and make reasonable adjustments for children with SEND.

Strong, ordinarily available provision ensures that the support children need is embedded in everyday practice. This is not just about meeting the needs of children with SEND—it's about delivering high-quality learning experiences for all children, enabling them to thrive and succeed from the very start.



Is inclusive and differentiated, recognising that all children learn and develop in different ways.

It supports individual progress by adapting teaching to meet a range of needs, interests, and starting points.

Encourages a positive attitude to learning, helping children develop the confidence, curiosity, and resilience to explore, experiment, and make independent choices.

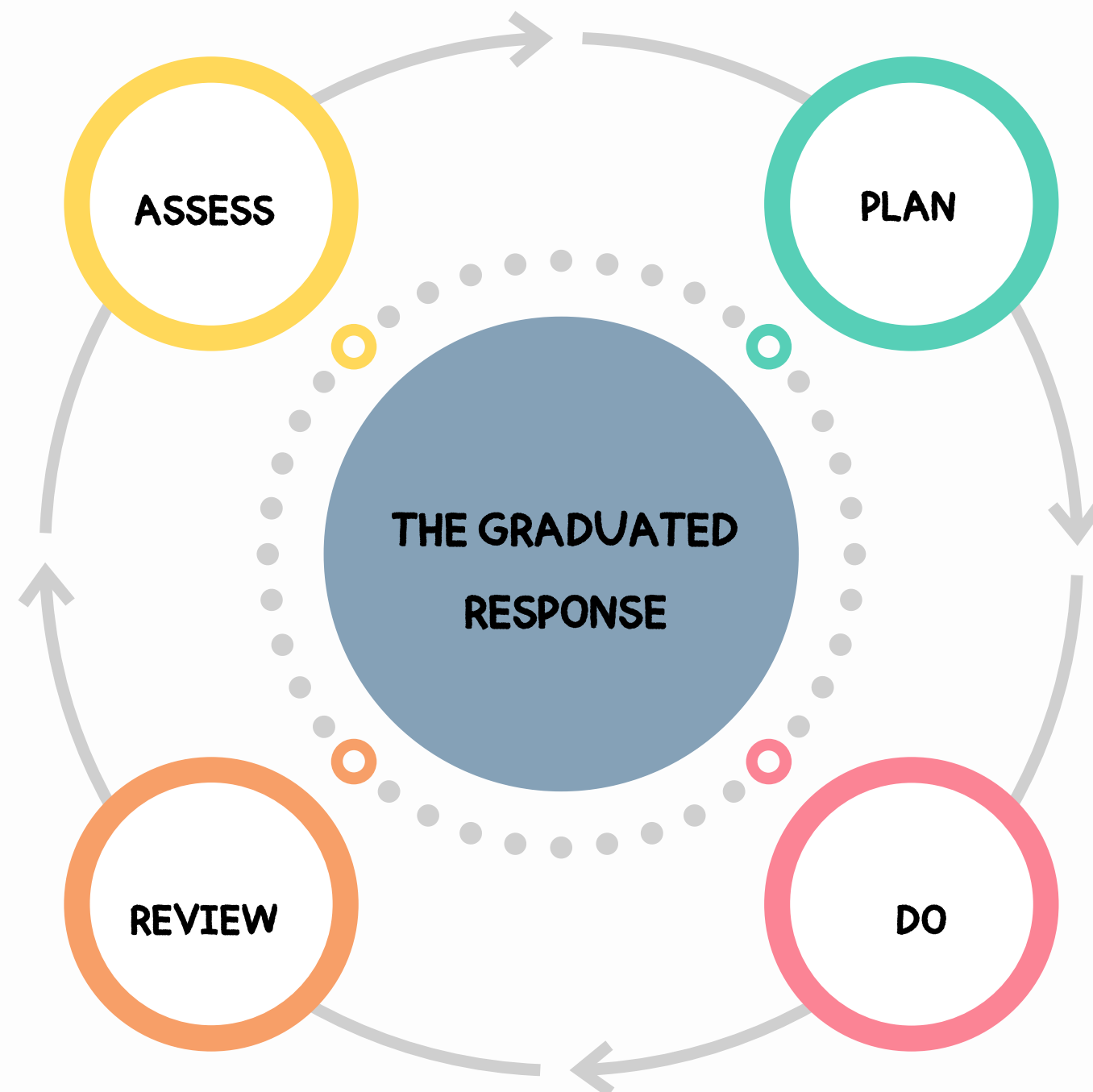
Builds positive relationships with children and their families, fostering a strong sense of belonging, security, and value. Practitioners work in partnership with parents to support each child's learning journey.

Combines adult-guided and child-led experiences, ensuring that learning is purposeful, playful, and rooted in what children already know and can do.

Enables children to explore, experiment, plan and make decisions for themselves

Is informed by careful observation and assessment, enabling practitioners to plan for and respond to each child's unique developmental pathway, and to identify when additional support may be needed.

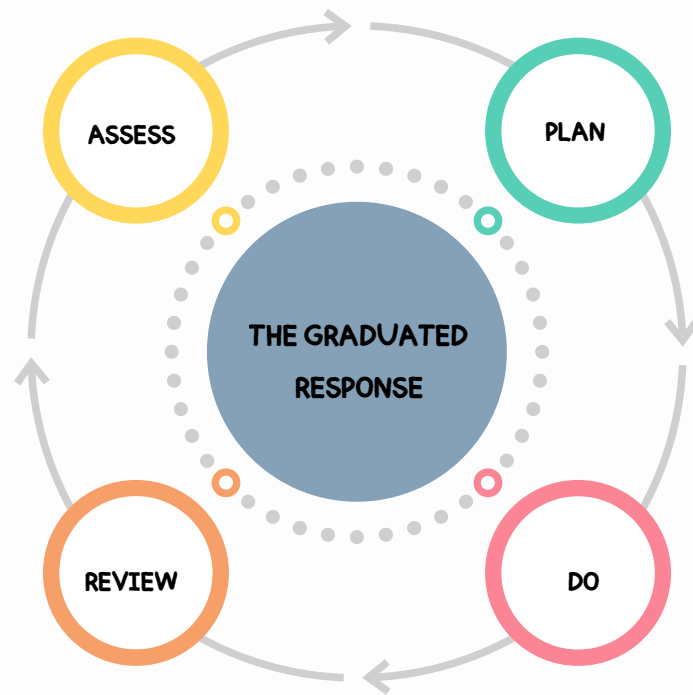
WHAT IS THE GRADUATED RESPONSE?



The Graduated Response is a helpful, four-step approach used by schools and early years settings to support children who may have SEND. These stages are Assess, Plan, Do and Review (ADPR). This process starts with general support for all children and moves to more specific help if needed. The goal is to make sure every child gets the right support to grow and succeed.

Most children in Early Years settings have their needs met through high-quality, inclusive teaching. This is SEND Support. Some may need additional support which can include small group activities, focused individual time, and environmental adaptations which are identified through the ADPR process.

ASSESS



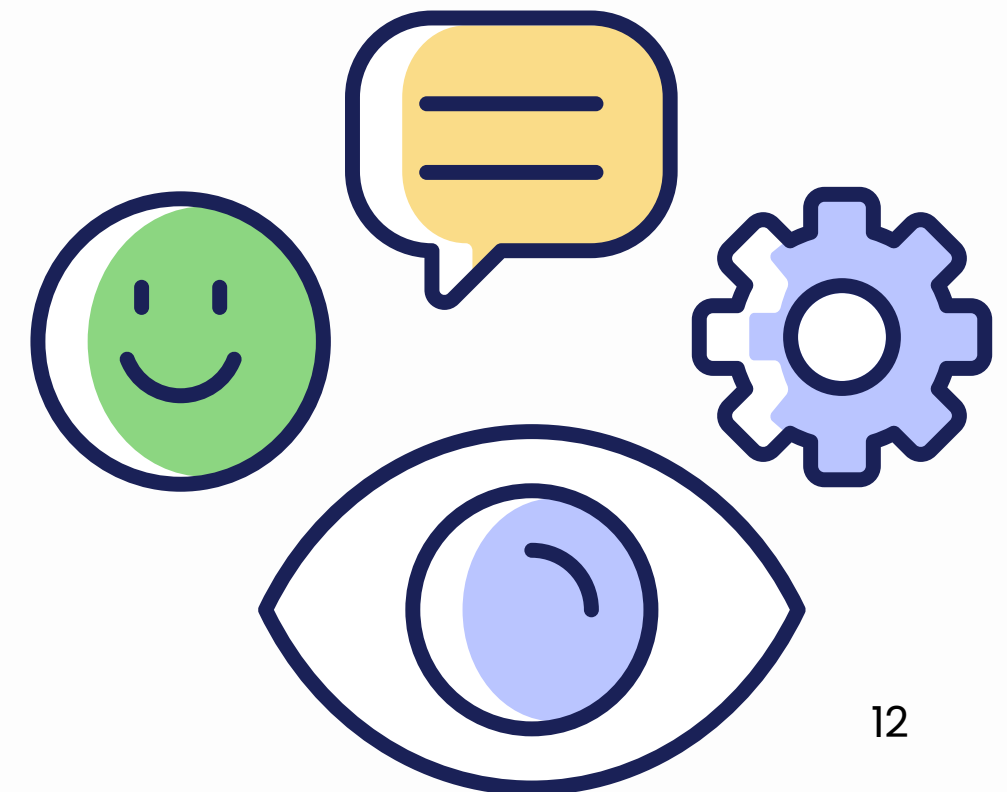
Assessment is the initial step in identifying a child's needs. The setting SENCO leads this process in collaboration with the child's key worker and parents/carers with the aim of identifying the child's strengths and areas of need.

If you need more help assessing and setting targets [this Dingley's Promise resource](#) is really helpful.

Assessment can involve various activities, such as observation, play-based assessments, discussions with parents/carers, and using developmental tools like Development Matters, Birth to 5 and Speech and Language screening (ECAT). It also includes responses to differentiated planning.

All children develop at different rates and when identifying whether a child has, or may have SEND, the following questions should be considered:

- Is the child having difficulty in one or more area of learning that is significantly greater than that of their peers?
- Does the child have a disability that is preventing them accessing the facilities of the provider?
- In order for the child to make progress, is the provider going to have to make changes that is additional to, or different from, that which is normally made available?

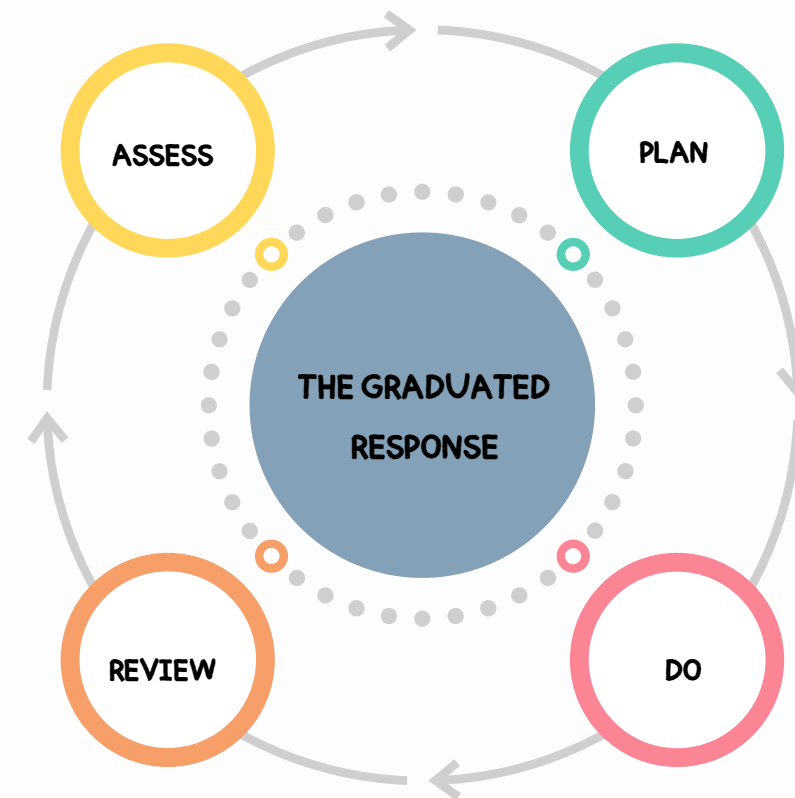


PLAN/DO

Support that is identified for a child following on from assessment should then be planned with parents and agreed by all. Planning should be supported through making use of the guidance within this document and will involve setting a review date.



Our Day Nursery



The child's support is typically implemented by their key worker and overseen by the SENCO. It's important to ensure that the practitioner has sufficient time and understanding to deliver this support. The SENCO can help the key worker by advising on effective implementation, modelling strategies, and problem-solving as support will need to be monitored and adjusted.

Plans should:

- Consider the views of the child and parent/carer
- Have specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound (SMART) goals.
- Outline specific intervention approaches to achieve identified outcomes
- Use evidence-based interventions and strategies
- Be delivered by practitioners with the right skills and knowledge
- Identify if staff need any additional training
- Be time specific

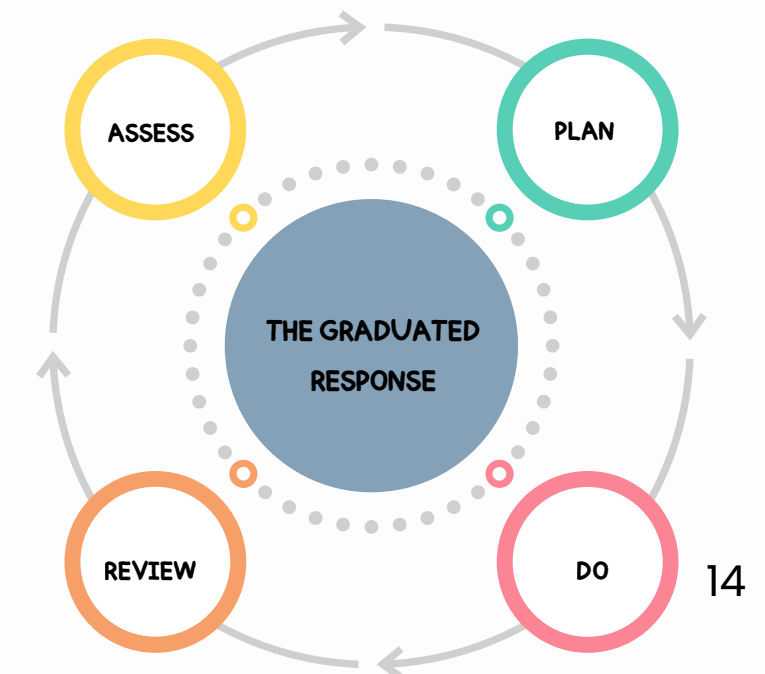
REVIEW

Regular reviews of the plan in place is essential to assess its impact and make necessary adjustments. During the review, it's important to identify both the child's progress and areas where further support is needed. Using data and observations will show you how far a child has progressed towards the goals that you set following assessment.

Consider seeking advice from other services and agencies including GP, Health Visitor, Children's Centre, Speech and Language Therapy, Occupational Therapy, EY Operational Group, Paediatrician, Educational Psychologist, PlayWise Learning CIC, Children's Centres.

At the review meeting the practitioner and SENCO working with the child's parents, and taking into account the child's views, should:

- Review the effectiveness of the support
- Review the impact of the support on the child's progress
- Evaluate the impact and quality of support
- Identify any changes to the outcomes
- Identify and agree any changes to the support and next steps, following a continuation of the ADPR cycle
- At this stage, after trying the strategies suggested in this document, and reviewing progress, you feel you need further advice and support you should complete an Early Years SEND Request for Support form.



UNIVERSAL, TARGETED AND SPECIALIST PROVISION

In your setting you will have children with various SEND and additional needs who will require different levels of support. Some may need only universal provision, while others may require targeted or specialist support consistently due to the severity of their needs. It is expected that inclusive provision and universal support are effectively implemented and evaluated before increasing support levels.



UNIVERSAL

The majority of children will respond positively to simple, reasonable adjustments to meet their needs. This includes inclusive practice and reasonable adjustments.



TARGETED

Support for children with specific needs may include small group and individual interventions, like language groups. While such support is still expected to be ordinarily available, settings can claim funding at Enhanced Universal or Targeted levels when necessary.

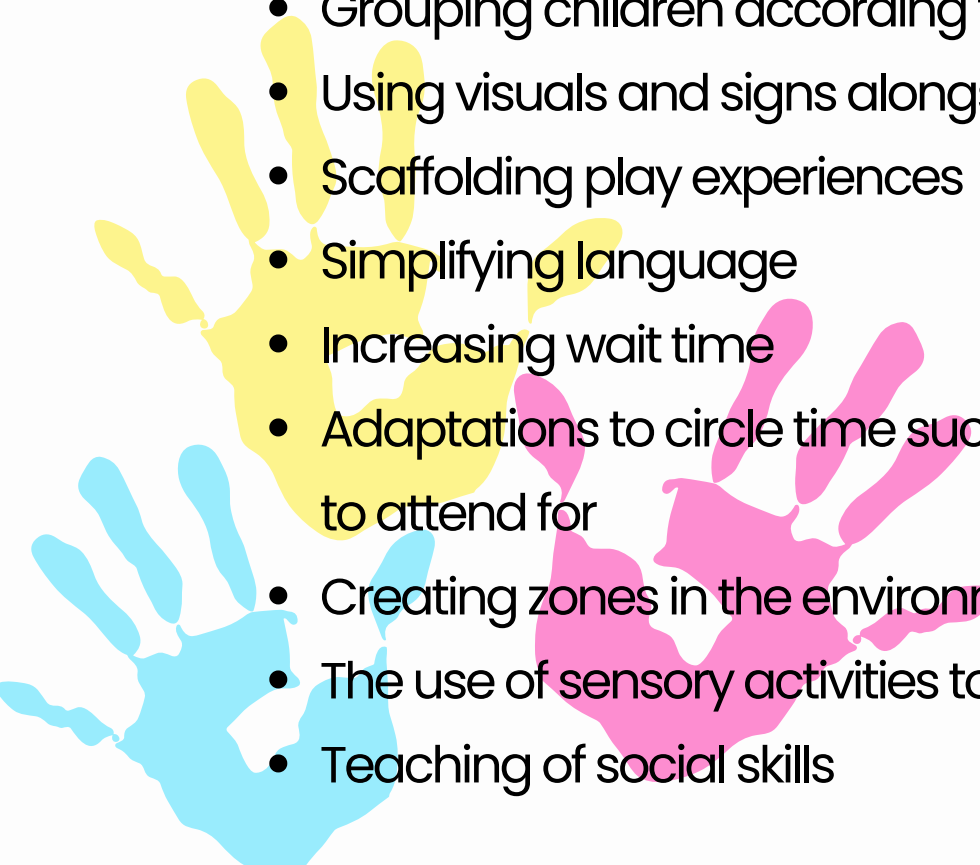


SPECIALIST

A small number of children with complex needs may require advice from specialist agencies and personalised and individual support. Settings can apply for High-Level Targeted or Specialist funding to support¹⁵ these children.

REASONABLE ADJUSTMENTS

Providers must make reasonable adjustments to ensure that children with a disability are not disadvantaged compared to their peers. What is considered reasonable takes into account a number of factors including cost and availability of resources (in relation to the size and budget of the provider); the interests of the other children; health and safety risks; and practical considerations. You cannot charge parents for reasonable adjustments.

- 
- 
- Smaller group activities
 - Enhanced ratios for certain parts of the day
 - Grouping children according to developmental stage for certain activities
 - Using visuals and signs alongside spoken language
 - Scaffolding play experiences
 - Simplifying language
 - Increasing wait time
 - Adaptations to circle time such as reducing the time a child is expected to attend for
 - Creating zones in the environment including quieter spaces
 - The use of sensory activities to promote regulation
 - Teaching of social skills
 - Adapting tasks so that they are motivating
 - Planned and structured small group and individual activities
 - Planning for consistent staff to support certain activities e.g., toileting, snack time, arrival
 - Ongoing training and supervision for staff
 - Enhanced transitional support for moving up to primary school
 - Implementation of advice from external professionals
 - Positive reinforcement including praise and incentives used carefully
 - Time built into each session to focus on a child's individual targets
 - Emotion coaching and visuals to support emotional literacy and regulation

AI to support inclusive teaching & SEND

Artificial Intelligence (AI) can be a valuable tool for supporting inclusive teaching and reducing workload. When used effectively, AI can help staff adapt resources, improve accessibility, develop personalised support strategies, and streamline administrative tasks. AI should be used to enhance professional judgement, not replace it, and all outputs should be reviewed for accuracy and appropriateness before use.

Communication & Literacy	Targets & Provision	Differentiation & Adaptive Teaching	Meetings & Administration
Adapt texts and learning materials to different reading abilities. Create social stories and communication scripts for specific situations. Generate word banks, glossaries and writing supports for classroom tasks. Simplify instructions, worksheets and assessment questions. Support communication with families through translation and plain English.	Turn broad concerns into clear and measurable SMART targets. Generate practical provision ideas and reasonable adjustments. Create TA briefing notes to support lesson preparation. Develop question prompts that encourage independence and thinking skills. Produce quick-reference guidance for staff supporting specific needs.	Adapt resources to meet a range of learning needs. Create differentiated questions with appropriate levels of challenge. Personalise learning materials around pupils' interests and strengths. Generate visual schedules, task breakdowns and support prompts. Break homework and independent tasks into manageable steps.	Summarise meeting notes into clear records and actions. Draft parent letters and communications in accessible language. Create pupil passports, one-page profiles and transition documents. Condense lengthy reports and EHCPs into staff-friendly summaries. Support reflection and problem-solving as a professional thinking partner.

Important Considerations

-  Review all AI-generated content for accuracy and suitability.
-  Never enter identifiable pupil information into public AI tools.
-  Follow school GDPR, safeguarding and data protection guidance.
-  Use AI to support your professional judgement, not replace it.

BUILDING REGULATION SKILLS

Self-regulation is a child's growing ability to manage their emotions, thoughts, and behaviours in order to achieve goals and respond positively to situations.

- Self-regulation evolves from co-regulation, where adults who have a close, secure relationship with a child, work together with a child to manage their emotions in difficult situations and return to a state of balance.
- Research shows that how adults respond to a child influences strongly how children subsequently deal with their emotions so it's important that all staff are trained in using emotion coaching and empathic responses with all children, even when some are harder to understand or when they evoke strong feelings in you.
- With practice, children gradually move from relying on adult support to independently managing their own emotions and behaviours.



The adult's role is fundamental in a child's development of self-regulation. Through consistent, responsive, and supportive interactions, adults help children learn to navigate their internal states and external behaviours effectively. A calm child is much more able to monitor themselves and their responses and to engage in play and learning.

Adults help by modelling calming techniques, naming and discussing feelings and teaching strategies for managing emotions. This supports children in recognising their feelings and developing problem-solving and impulse control skills.

Positive relationships support wellbeing and the gradual development of self-regulation. When adults tune in to children's signals and respond sensitively and consistently to meet their needs, children can feel safe, relaxed and valued. Beginning to work on self-regulation in the early years has been shown to have a lasting impact on children so is really important to get right. See more here: [Self-regulation strategies | EEF, Teacher-Handbook-Self-Regulation-in-the-Early-Years.pdf](#)

PROMOTING POSITIVE BEHAVIOUR

Behaviour is a form of communication and children who are developing their communication and language skills may use unwanted behaviours as a response to a challenging situation. Adults supporting children should make every effort to understand an individual child's communication methods by liaising with parents and gathering information from spending time getting to know the child as an individual when they start at the setting.

An understanding of rules and boundaries is important for developing social skills and in helping children to feel safe and contained. Using positive language and clear visuals or objects of reference is an effective strategy that enables children to gain a greater understanding of adult's expectations and therefore have more success with managing their behaviour.

Children need a consistent approach to develop their understanding of expectations within their setting. Any approach to supporting positive behaviour needs to be underpinned by a recognition of behaviour as an expression of feelings, and adults responding using empathy, support and guidance. Sometimes children have different boundaries at home, so it can take time for them to learn new rules. Strong relationships are the most effective way of promoting positive behaviours.

Strategies such as using visuals, pre-empting or diverting a child away from a situation, are good ways of diffusing things. Reflecting on your environment and play resources are also ways to support a child's development. Speaking to them, when things have calmed down, about why their behaviour was not appropriate, how they were feeling and how others may have felt is a good next step.

For more advice see these links: [DfE guidance](#), [NDNA guidance](#), resources and advice, [Tiny Happy People](#)

Use your knowledge of the child to try and unpick their behaviour and make use of positive reminders to encourage a child to keep themselves and others safe. Young children are learning the ability to regulate their own behaviour, control impulses and understand why they behave as they do and how to be safe. Children need positive reminders, self-regulation partners and time to develop all these skills.

RELATIONAL APPROACHES

We encourage settings to make use of relational approaches to underpin how they understand and respond to children. These approaches look to make connections to support children to feel valued, secure and understood rather than seeking to correct behaviour which we don't want to see.

Relational approaches understand how trauma or adversity can impact children. They understand how relationships are **the only way** of helping children move on from difficulties caused in the context of damaging relationships. Relationships are used to support engagement, well-being and curiosity in children as well as to connect with parents and carers.

An embedded relational approach will lead to staff consistently trying to understand what lies beneath a surface behaviour, reminding children of boundaries when things don't go to plan and making sure there is time to repair relationships after something has gone wrong.



Montessori Children's House

A setting who has good relational practices will also support and care for the well-being of their staff.

Settings may be able to access the Building Stronger Foundations programme which provides training and support to work towards becoming relational and trauma informed.

WORKING WITH PARENTS/CARERS

Children make the best progress when adults at home and in nursery share an understanding of their strengths and needs. Involving parents in discussions about their child's emerging needs and support options is crucial with decisions made in consultation with the key person and SENCO.

Practitioners should explain the graduated response to parents, emphasising the need for ongoing support based on the child's progress. Parents are encouraged to replicate strategies used in nursery at home and will often appreciate practical guidance on toys and resources.



Chiltern Day Nursery

It's essential to respect differing perspectives and work towards a shared understanding of the child's needs and strengths. For many parents you might be one of the first people to identify that their child has additional needs, and this may be very challenging for them to hear. Being mindful of this try to make sure that you proceed at the pace parents are ready for.

Some parents might feel more supported bringing along a friend or family member to discussions you have about their child, and you might wish to suggest parents who would benefit from this. Finding out from parents how they prefer to be communicated with also ensures that they feel respected by you.

TRANSITIONS

Preparing for transition to school requires planning such as updating a child's paperwork, including their strengths and needs and likes and dislikes. Children with SEND or emerging needs may qualify for transition funding, which should be discussed with an EY SEND Advisor during the Spring and Summer term before Reception and a transition planning meeting organised with the school the child is moving onto and their parents/carers.

Settings should also share information about all children moving onto school at our annual Transition morning.

[See here for all transition documents.](#)

Moving onto primary school is an exciting change for all children and parents and it's important to support parents who may be worried to help them feel equipped to support their child to the best of their abilities.



Jancett Stanley Park Road



The PlayWise Support Passport is another great resource which can be completed by adults who know a child well to help other adults understand the needs of the child or young person.

Other useful links:

[EYFS National Strategy](#) – all about transitions

[CDC](#) – SEN and disability in the early years: A toolkit

[PACEY](#) – Preparing your child for starting school

[Birth to 5 matters](#) – High quality transitions

Communication and language development

Some children may be pre-verbal and at the stage of understanding visual cues rather than spoken language whereas others may have some words but struggle to use these in sentences or to apply rules of grammar so that what they say makes sense.

Other children may struggle more with their communication skills and therefore find it hard to know how to use language in their interactions with others.

Children who have difficulties with their communication and interaction skills find it difficult to understand the world around them or to make their needs known. You may have children in your setting who struggle with their speech and sound production and can be difficult to understand. Other children may have expressive (use of language) or receptive (understanding of language) difficulties.

Some children have language difficulties associated with another condition, for example Autism or Down's Syndrome whereas others have a language need where this is no clear identifiable cause and may go on to receive a diagnosis of Developmental Language Disorder.

Some children can display delays in their speech, language and communication skills for other reasons. This can include children who have hearing difficulties or glue ear and have therefore missed out on some early exposure to language which subsequently impacts on their development.

Some other children may have English as an additional language and therefore develop their English speaking and understanding more slowly (to begin with) than their peers who only speak one language.





If my speaking isn't very clear

Repeat back speech which is unclear to model to a child

Encourage face to face communication so you can model production of good speech

Make sure that a child has had their hearing checked



If I'm struggling to focus

Offer spaces for individual play and smaller group play

Create quieter spaces with fewer distractions and use these for target time

Use songs and materials which are highly motivating to capture and extend attention

Give a child a particular role during an activity so that they have less to focus on



If I can't make choices in my play

Visually label all resources and guide children to these

Use choice boards and model choosing

Have spaces which are less busy



If I can't understand spoken language well

Use a total communication approach which includes facial, expression, sign and speech

Get to a child's level when communicating. Start sentences using a child's name, use shorter sentences and simple language

Repeat language and teach new words. Narrate what children are doing, what they're playing with, how they might be feeling

Give time to process information and only give instructions one step at a time



If I can't communicate myself well

Encourage children to "show me" if they can't tell you
Plan time for talking and listening activities

Give children time to respond and praise and reinforce all attempts they make

Create a language rich environment to expose me to lots of quality language

Use closed questions and forced choices as well as commenting on what I am doing and repeating back and extending what I have said (aim for five comments to every question)

Listening and Attention

I WANT TO BE ABLE TO:

- Notice my surroundings
- Notice others
- Start interacting with others because I know that they're fun
- Direct my gaze towards toys
- Look in the direction of others
- Respond to my name
- Respond to visuals, objects or reference, signs or other communication methods
- Share attention with others
- Take turns with others

In nursery you could support me by ...



Intensive Interaction

Join in with my play, imitate what I do and show me that interactions can be back and forth. I might not want to share my toy so get one of your own for this!

Developing listening skills

Use songs, rhymes and other focused listening activities to help me focus on sounds and experiences.

Now/next boards

Show me that I have something coming up next that I am really interested in to motivate me to concentrate and complete the thing I am less interested in first.

Build anticipation

Boost my curiosity by hiding objects I like and making me want to explore. Build my interest and anticipation by using "ready, steady, go" interactions.

Use preferred activities

Find things I like to do and gradually extend the time we do them for. Use a timer to show me how long we have to spend at something and give me lots of praise.

Bucket time

Use toys which are really exciting to me for short periods of time. Build my anticipation before these come out and use them in a structured way – you model first and then maybe me and the other children can have a go.



Our Day Nursery



Understanding

I WANT TO BE ABLE TO:

- Understand non-verbal cues
- Follow a set of directions which are visually represented
- Build relationships with adults and children
- Understand routines and instructions so that I can join in
- Play with other children and understand their play
- Understand stories especially when there aren't any pictures
- Know what you're saying when you ask me questions

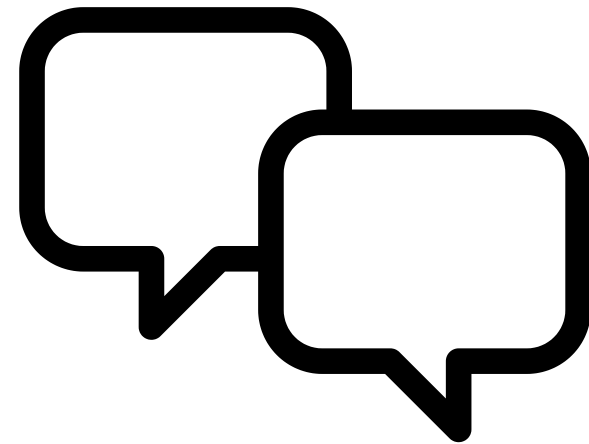


In nursery you could support me by ...



Language building

Make time during every session to sit with me and focus on my understanding. This could be through using flash cards, picture books or talking about what we can see other children doing.



Start with daily routines

Focus on things which happen every day to build my understanding. Use visuals to show the steps and get me involved in identifying when a step has been completed and it's time to do the next one.

Visuals

Use visuals or objects of reference at each point of transition and to support what you're saying. This needs to be consistent to help build my understanding so it's important that all adults do the same thing.



Social stories

Write social stories to help me understand different situations. We will need to read these lots of times, often just before that thing is about to happen.



Adapting your language

Use less language when talking to me, pause during what you're saying and make sure I am showing good listening skills. If I don't understand repeat what you've said and then think about if you need to say it a different way.

Communicating and talking

I WANT TO BE ABLE TO:

- Tell you what I'd like to do in a way that you can understand
- Tell you if I need something
- Make friends
- Show you how I'm feeling so that I don't get frustrated
- Make my own choices
- Engage more in my environment through communication
- Learn to self-regulate and problem-solve

In nursery you could support me by ...



Create opportunities to develop language

Plan for structured times which are focused on increasing my language. This could be through songs or role play alongside a couple of other children who can model good skills that I can learn from.



Small world play

Set up play environments which are interesting to me and play with me. These experiences will encourage 'talk' because I'm interested in them and encourage me to use actions even if I can't use words.

Visual supports

Use a visual support which I can then use to show you what I want. This could be a choice board, a core board etc.

Start with nouns

These are some of the most useful words for me to begin with so do lots of modelling of how to use these when you're speaking to me, encouraging me to have a go too.

Build on what I know

Use familiar stories, songs and games to give me chances to show they language that I do have and to make me feel confident.

Pre-teach

Teach me the important words that are coming up in a group story before we read it all together. Cue me in when the words we have just learnt are about to be used.

Give me choices

Build in times during the day for me to make choices when it's just you and me. You can remind me how to do this and make me feel really special when I've been able to.



High View Nursery



At home you could support me by ...

Listening and Attention

Playing with me

Make time for us to play 1:1. Join in with my play, let me show you how I like to play and imitate what I do.

Have fun with me

Find things which I love and share these times with me. This could be using bubbles together, during bath time, or toys that are cause and effect (I can make them do something).

Make sure I'm listening

Use my name and get down to my level when you're talking to me. Sometimes you might need to say my name a few times, brush my cheek or do something funny to gain my attention. You could also try using pictures, songs or other things that I like to gain my attention.

Understanding

Teach me new words

Talk to me about things I'm interested in and comment on the things that I am doing or seeing. Focus on teaching me a small number of words at one time but repeating these over and over.

Use visuals

Have visuals or photos of things we do a lot of the time and use these alongside words to help me understand. Nursery will have some of these they can show you if needed.

Keep talking to me

Even if I don't seem to understand it's so important to keep talking to me. Use exaggerated facial expressions and sing-song language to sound even more interesting.

Communicating * and Talking

Be responsive

Give me lots of time to try and express myself. It might take me a longer time than you feel you have but reassure me and show me you're interested, and I will try.

Be understanding

I may get frustrated when I can't tell you what I want or when you can't understand me. Don't tell me off, but try and work out what I need and show me how to ask for it in a better way.

Extend my language

Ask me questions and show me how much you like speaking to me. Make sure you use good grammar, pronunciation and vocabulary otherwise I might learn bad habits!

Sing songs and share stories – Sing and talk to me as much as possible. It's a fun way of helping to develop my language skills.

Let's explore – Taking me to different places will encourage my curiosity and creativity and teach me new language.

Top Tips for promoting my language *

The ShREC approach from the EEF is a great framework for successful interactions with children. It begins by connecting with a child by showing interest in what they are doing before then responding to them in an attuned way: a way that feels comfortable for them. The role of the adult is to then expand the language a child uses, modelling good language in context.

- Make sure I can see your face when you're speaking
- Comment more and question less
- Use gestures when you're speaking
- Use short sentences and give me time to work out what you mean
- Make sure I'm paying attention first



Dorchester Primary School

Sh



Share attention

Be at the child's level. Pay attention to what they are focused on.

R



Respond

Follow the child's lead. Respond to their non-verbal and verbal communications. You could make a brief comment on what they can see, hear or feel.

E



Expand

Repeat what the child says and build on it by adding more words to turn it into a sentence.

C



Conversation

Have extended back and forth interactions. Give children time to listen, process and reply.

[Read more about it here](#)

Useful resources

[The Speech, Language and Communication Framework \(SLCF\)](#)

[WellComm speech and language toolkit. Screening and intervention](#)

[Universally Speaking 0-5. Ages and stage of children's communication development](#)

[Speech and Language UK progress checker](#)

[Help for families. Speech and Language UK](#)

[Creating a communication supportive environment](#)

[Visual Support. National Autistic Society](#)

[Raising Bilingual Children - TLC](#)

[Cognus Speech and Language Therapy advice and resources](#)



Autism and social communication

Some children struggle to understand others' perspectives, making sharing and taking turns difficult. They may prefer solitary play, find it hard to follow adult-led activities, and focus intently on tasks that they enjoy.

Children with social communication difficulties often struggle to understand emotions. Some may not show many emotions, while others quickly feel overwhelmed and upset, and need a lot support to calm down.

Some children may find it hard when things do not happen in the way that they feel they should. This can make it hard when things change or there is a transition point. Children may become very focused on things they enjoy and like to do the same things over and over again.

Children with Autism or social communication difficulties will show a different way of thinking, feeling, and learning. Identifying what these preferences are you will have the best chance of helping a child to feel understood and to thrive. Some children will show developmental differences early on, others with more subtle social communication difficulties may not have these identified until later on in their childhood or adolescence.

Some children show differences in how they process sensory information. This may mean that they seek out certain textures or movements in quite a repetitive way but then avoid certain environments or become upset by certain tastes or sounds.



Some children may be developing their understanding of language but find it hard to understand non-literal words or phrases where there could be different interpretations.

Some children find it hard to share attention with others. This means that they find eye contact difficult and that they can seem to be quite selective in what they will listen to and pay attention to. Only if something is really exciting for them might you be able to grab their attention.



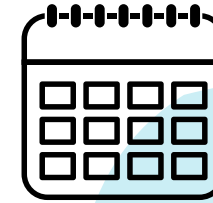


If I find it hard to play with others

Model turn-taking and incorporate this into all group times. Provide positive reinforcement whenever a child demonstrates good skills

Structure small group activities which are of interest to a child to provide more motivation for sharing and turn-taking

Build in partner talk or paired activities during sessions.

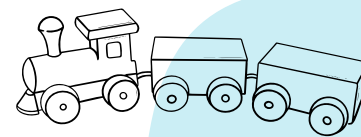


If I like to do my own thing all of the time

Use visuals to help with transitions and routines. This could be traffic lights, now/next boards, visual timetables

Try and make sure that most routines are the same every day and remember that I will notice tiny things that are changed

Positively reinforce when a child is able to follow an adult led instruction or task. Make sure this feels really fun and meaningful for the child

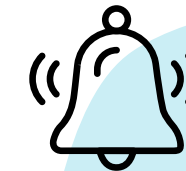


If I only want to play with the same toys

Make other toys more exciting by incorporating anticipation e.g., "Ready, go

Limit access to certain toys so they only come out on specified days

Use a timer to show how much longer is left using a toy and then help me to choose the next thing to play with.



If I find it hard when things change

Provide warning before transition points and use visuals to support routines and also changes

Use a visual timetable for all children

Use songs and rhyme to support with transitions points e.g., '*this is the way we wash our hands*'

Use language such as "now, next, then"

Exploring my way

I WANT TO BE ABLE TO:

- Feel ok when an adult takes charge
- Pay attention to a task that is adult-led
- Show an interest in people around me rather than just in toys
- Spend some time doing something an adult has suggested
- Spend an increasing amount of time at an activity because I am enjoying it
- Use toys and other play equipment in the way that you're supposed to
- Know what to expect each day
- Feel calm and settled in nursery
- Experience transition points as positive

In nursery you could support me by ...

*Visual timetable

Use a personalised visual timetable for me and share this with me before, and at the point of, every point of change. Involve me as much as possible in identifying what's coming up next.

Now	Next

Now/next board

If I need help moving on from something I am really enjoying having a visual to show me what's happening next, which is something I like, will help.

Social stories

Write a social story for me in advance of things changing or to help me understand a situation I am currently struggling with. Make sure this is tailored to me and has lots of pictures so I can more easily relate to it.

Objects of reference

I might benefit from seeing what is coming up next. Show me an item that relates to the next activity to help me move onto it. I'm likely to need this for all transition points until I learn the routines of the day or can follow a visual timetable.



Parallel play

Play with toys which are the same as those I am playing with alongside me. You can show me how you play with toys, but I won't need to be worried that you're going to take my toys.



Shared attention

I WANT TO BE ABLE TO:

- Notice other people
- Spend time focused on the same thing as someone else
- Enjoy playing alongside or with someone else
- Play alongside other children and notice what they're doing
- Take an adult to something I want
- Have the confidence to try and communicate with others
- Copy actions at rhyme time
- Point to something that I would like.
- Notice different tones of voice and understand what these mean
- Make connections with people
- Take turns during play

In nursery you could support me by ...

* Cause and effect toys

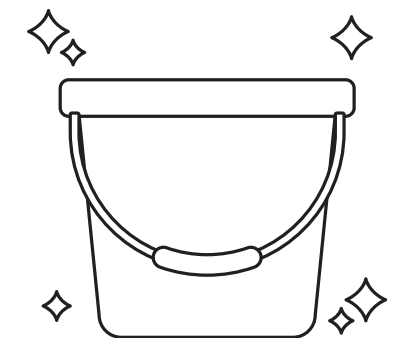
Have toys available which do something so I can start to learn that actions have consequences. Having mirrors that I can look into, musical instruments that I can play, and other cause and effect toys are great for helping me learn the first skills needed for reciprocal interactions.

Floortime

Use different types of play to build an emotional connection with me and to help me develop a range of social and emotional skills. Get in a good position in front of me in a fun play zone and follow my lead. Show me how much you're enjoying following my play and then pause – wait, watch and wonder. Read more about this approach [here](#) and [here](#).

Bucket time

Use a staged approach to developing shared attention and engagement through daily bucket time sessions. You may need to adults to support a child to start with. See [this guide here](#) for more detail.



Joint play

Play alongside me, copying my play before then starting to change how you play. When I notice this and show joint attention encourage me to take turns. We could build a tower together or roll a car backwards and forwards.



Intensive interaction

Help me to develop the first skills needed for communication using short bursts of [intensive interaction](#), gradually extending our sessions as I understand what we're doing.

Curiosity Programme

Connect with me through respectful, playful and fun reciprocal interactions. Use songs to make normal activities more fun and use different materials to capture my curiosity.

Need for predictability and structure

I WANT TO BE ABLE TO:

- Understand transition points during the day
- Feel ok when something changes or happens which is unusual
- Use toys in different ways and learn from things adults show me
- Start showing some imaginative play with small world toys or in the home corner
- Settle in quickly at the start of the day
- Stay happy and regulated at home time
- Build relationships with adults and children
- Enjoy play and expand the toys I use and how I use them

In nursery you could support me by ...



Gradual introduction

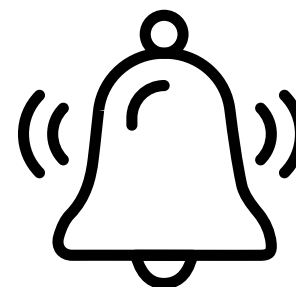
Introduce new activities and experiences sensitively and in smaller amounts, e.g. small tray of sand presented individually.

Pre-warning

Let me explore anything new in nursery before other children arrive or when they are in another part of nursery to help me get used to things.

Transition time

Use the same signal to show me that it's the beginning or end of an activity. This could be a song, hand signal or a musical instrument.



Calming down

Find out things that help me to become calm and show me how to use them. This could include breathing activities, tight hugs or other deep pressure activities or something that I am so interested in it distracts me away from the thing I am worried about.



Slowly, slowly

Gradually become involved in my play and show me new toys or new ways of playing with the toys I like. It's important that I feel safe to let you take charge and that you listen to my choices but also that you show me how much fun it can be to do things differently.

Safe space

Have a calm, quiet and safe space I can go to if I am feeling a bit overwhelmed. Show me a visual so I know that I need to use it.





At home you could support me by ...

Exploring my way

You are the best toy!

Give your child your full attention and have them lead the interaction. Copy back whatever they do or respond to every slight interaction they give. Even when children aren't talking it's important to give them time and space to communicate.

Join in with my play

I might find it hard for you to use my toys but if you can play with something similar next to me, I will find that easier.



Our Day Nursery

Shared attention

Shared experiences

Use things which are really exciting to help me share attention with you. This could be texture or sound books, or other toys that do something in response to an action from me.

Toys that do something!

Have toys that I can start to learn from that actions have consequences. Having mirrors that I can look into, musical instruments that I can play, toys that have buttons or switches.

Ready, steady, go games

Try saying 'ready, steady...' and see whether your child does something to show you they want you to 'go'. They might say 'go', or they might make a sound, do an action or look at you. For example, pull the swing back and say 'ready, steady...?' waiting for them to say 'go' (or show you they want you to do it) before letting go

Need for predictability and structure



Visuals for transition

If I find it hard to follow routines, draw me pictures or use objects to show me what is going next. Otherwise ask Nursery what visuals they use and see if you can get a copy.

Lots of preparation

Give me lots of warning that something is about to end and make sure I understand. Use pictures and simple words, a timer might help too.

Calming down

Find out things that help me to become calm and show me how to use them. Make sure you have things we can take when we're leaving the house and that I have a safe space at home.



Useful resources

[National Autistic Society](#)

[Autism Education Trust](#)

[Framework Documents](#) | [Autism Education Trust](#)

[What is Augmentative and Alternative Communication and how can it benefit autistic people?](#)

[Resources – Cognus](#)

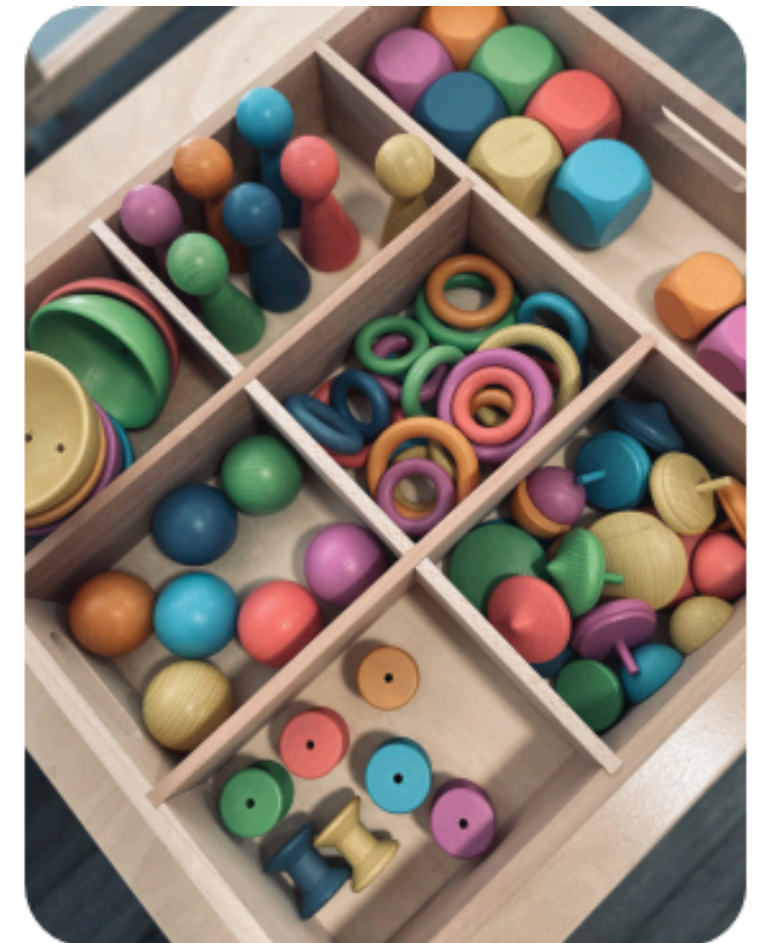
Early Bird training course [Our Services – PlayWise Learning CIC](#)

[Early years](#) | [Ambitious about Autism](#)

[Right from the start toolkit for parents](#)



High View Nursery



Our Day Nursery

Cognition and learning

The earliest signs that we may notice children struggling with learning are when they are tracking below their chronological age in prime areas.

Some children may be showing signs of learning at a slower rate to their peers and have what we would call mild learning difficulties (MLD). For these children it takes them longer to learn new information and they may need to be exposed to information many more times before they learn it.

Some children may start to show difficulties in particular areas of their learning. These are called specific learning difficulties and could apply to literacy, numeracy, coordination skills and others. These needs are unlikely to be evident in children in the early years.

The way children view learning underpins their engagement and later success so it's important we get it right for children from the very beginning. Learning to recognise patterns is an important part of developing reasoning skills across literacy and numeracy development and problem-solving supports all forms of learning.

Some children who may have other diagnoses and be showing significant differences in how they learn or significant delays in their learning may have severe learning difficulties (SLD) or profound and multiple learning difficulties (PMLD). These children are likely to need support in all areas of learning and across the curriculum.



Some children may be delayed in their play skills and be slower to develop imaginative play. They may prefer to play with the same toys over and over again, move quickly between activities or struggle to know how to get started in their play.



If I find it hard to focus on stories

- Set up a smaller group story time where you can tailor the experience
- Have a range of books available throughout the session and easily accessible
- Have books related to topics of interest for children who are more reluctant readers
- Teach early phonics skills through stories, songs and rhymes



If I don't seem very interested in learning tasks

- Make them fun! The more children enjoy them the more they will engage. Choose characters or interests to link into activities to increase motivation.
- Music is particularly effective in embedding learning.
- Create interest bags to be used in small groups
- Keep focused tasks short and visually scaffolded i.e., with a timer



If I don't seem to understand shape, space and number

- Point out shapes, colours and patterns during all activities and have toys where children can practise sorting and matching independently
- Have lots of resources around that have numbers on or are related to number and quantity e.g., number beads, blocks, stickers, cutters, posters
- During a turn-taking game keep a tally of the number of goes each child has had. Find a way to include dice and counting during games children are motivated by



If I'm not sure how to play with toys

- Play alongside a child and scaffold their play at intervals
- Make sure there isn't too much to choose from in one go
- Make sure you have a variety of toys – you may need toys for younger children for those who are at an earlier stage of play



If I seem to forget things I have learnt

- Use language like "what will happen if .." lots of the time to prompt thinking
- Make sure all learning is broken down into smaller steps
- Have toys and activities out for children to explore cause and effect

Literacy

I WANT TO BE ABLE TO:

- Share a book with an adult
- Start to know the different sounds that form words
- Show an interest in different types of story
- Choose a book I would like to share
- Show recognition of familiar stories
- Know early sounds
- Mark make with meaning
- Recognise my name when it's written down

In nursery you could support me by ...

* Story sacks

Accompany stories with props, figures, fancy dress and other things which bring the story to life.

Small group story time

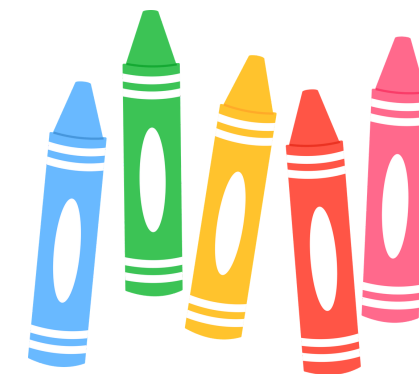
Focus on books about things we're interested in and add in props to make them really exciting.



Dorchester Nursery

Floor books

Make a floor book which shows what a child has been learning in nursery which can be shared with home and reinforced. See [here for more information](#).



Mark-making everywhere

Encourage me to have a go at mark-making by including activities in all sorts of places. This could include a notebook and pen in the home corner, a whiteboard in the construction area and chalk to use outside.

Labelling

Make sure everything has a visual label on it which shows me what the word looks like alongside a picture of what it means. This will help me start to build my knowledge of early sight words.

Build comprehension

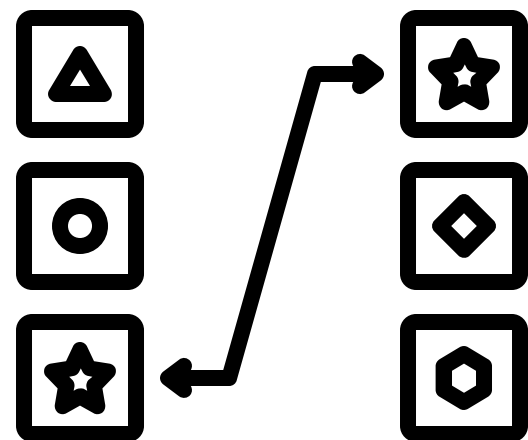
During story times take the time to ask questions and make comments about what's happening. Give me lots of examples to increase my comprehension.



Numeracy

I WANT TO BE ABLE TO:

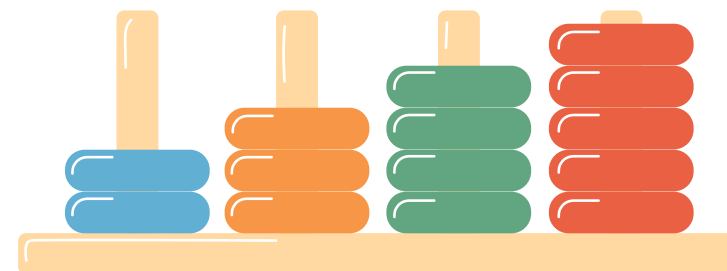
- Notice similarities and differences
- Notice patterns in shapes
- Begin measuring
- Sort items by colour
- Number items 1-10
- Tell you how many there are
- Start to understand 'more' or 'less'



In nursery you could support me by ...

Counting everything

Sing songs which involve numbers (five little ducks, ten green bottles, read books that have numbers in (The Very Hungry Caterpillar, Ten Black Dots) and play games with me that involve dice and counting spaces.



Matching and sorting

Give me chances to sort and classify objects by size, shape or colour as this will help develop my logical thinking skills. You could use crayons, pasta shapes, blocks or leaves when we go out in the garden.

Finding patterns

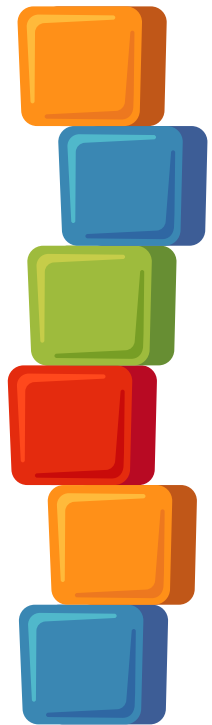
Show me patterns in the ways things look and encourage me to find patterns myself. This could be in things I can see or things we do. Let me make patterns during arts and crafts activities and help me to spot the patterns I have made.

Let's race

Use a timer for racing and help me to understand what slowest and fastest means.

Guessing games

Set up games where I can practise pouring and measuring and challenge me to work out which container has the most and the least in.



Who can build the tallest tower?

Set up a competition to see who can build the tallest tower and show me how to measure this.



Thinking skills

I WANT TO BE ABLE TO:

- Start to understand why things happen
- Work out how to use unfamiliar toys
- Remember information from day to day
- Predict what might happen with familiar toys
- Show curiosity about the world around me
- Problem solve when I'm not sure about something

In nursery you could support me by ...

* Learning walk

Take me round the setting and encourage my curiosity. Encourage me to ask questions about what we can see and think about why things are the way they are. Show me how to explore and investigate objects.

Pre-teaching

Spend some time with me before a group task to share some of the important information about what we will be learning.



Chiltern Day Nursery

Revisiting learning

If I am struggling to learn something new, we might need to go over it several times. Try working with me individually or as part of a small group in a quieter space to learn something again until I have mastered what we're working on.

Keep learning short and sweet

If I can't pay attention for the whole of circle time it's better to find something else for me to do. Help me increase my attention by using a timer which shows me how long we have left.

Make links

Tailor new learning to things I already know and help me to realise how different topics or concepts link together.



Model being 'stuck'

Pretend that you've made a mistake or got stuck on something and then model what you do to get help.



Play

In nursery you could support me by ...

I WANT TO BE ABLE TO:

- Use a wide range of toys
- Be able to work out how new toys work
- Remember things we learnt earlier in the term
- Be able to make choices in my play
- Feel ok if I can't use certain toys
- Start to show some imagination in my play
- Replicate things that happen in daily life in my play
- Play alongside other children
- Learn from the play of my friends

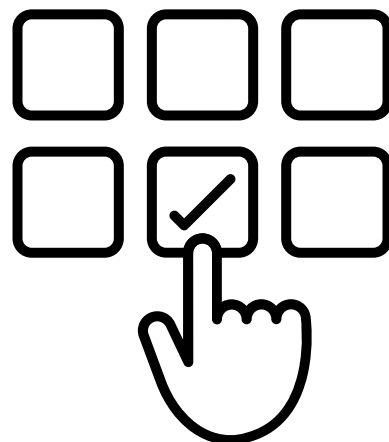


Small group play

Make sure I have some individually or small group supported play every time I am in nursery. Let me choose what we do but then show me the next steps of how I might play with toys or how to use toys I am less familiar with.

Choosing board

Make a visual choosing board which has images of some of the things I most enjoy and encourage me to make a choice using this every time I move onto something new.



Dorchester Nursery

Change the environment

Give me chances to play indoors and outdoors. It might help me to make choices and sustain play if it's only me and a few other children outdoors some of the time.

Mix it up

Make me interested by having toys in place I wouldn't expect. Think cars in play dough, Lego in the sand etc.

Sensory play

Let me play with things that awaken my curiosity and tap into different senses.

Extend my play

Play with me and show me what could be next steps in my play. Use some language to comment on what I'm doing. This works best 'little and often' throughout the week.



At home you could support me by ...

Literacy

ABC

Develop my awareness of sounds Sound words out when we're talking or playing. This means saying "b, a, g, that spells bag".

Use what's around

Play games like I spy with me or show me when you're reading. This could be in the shops, on sign posts, sometimes even on your phone.

Let's play outside

Children need a balance – places where they can be with nature, and playgrounds where they can explore nature. Take me out and let me explore different environments, whatever the weather.

Phonological awareness Understanding word sounds through rhymes and games – Rhyming games are key to helping children with their understanding of different word sounds and the rhythm of words. This can be hugely helpful for their language skills as they build to talking in sentences and eventually reading.



Jancett Park Lane

Number skills * 123

Go for a number walk

When you're out and about hunt for numbers! This could be on front doors, bus numbers, cars or counting birds.

Talk concepts

Talk to me about numerical concepts such as 'more' or 'less' when we're cooking or counting out toys, and 'higher', 'lower', 'taller' and 'smaller' when we're comparing objects.

Who can build the tallest tower?

Set up a competition to see who can build the tallest tower and show me how to measure this.

Let's race

Use a timer for racing and help me to understand what slowest and fastest means.

Guessing games

Set up games where I can practise pouring and measuring and challenge me to work out which container has the most and the least in.



At home you could support me by ...

Let's play!

Children need to play and develop and learn through play, but being playful as adults is also a proven way to increase emotional wellbeing. For children with developmental differences their play might look different, but they may also need more support to play.

Remember there's no right or wrong way to play but as adults we can show children things they might never have thought of.

The only important thing is that you give your child your undivided attention when you're playing. This means NO phones! Comment on what your child is doing, being playful, be curious and be silly.



Jelly Beans Preschool

Small world play*

This is a type of imaginary play where I might use small toys to act out things I have seen or make up my own worlds. If you can set up small world scenes for me that's a great way to encourage me to play.

Play can mean a lot of things to me! I might find things fun that you really wouldn't think I would. For small world play ordinary household objects like tubs, boxes, card, paper, old packaging, rocks, pebbles, sand, stones, shells, branches and even dried pulses, rice and bits of fabric are great. Of course I'll also need some animals or people to put into my world.

Play can be a great way of learning how to problem solve and how to be creative. Mix it up between encouraging your child to lead the play and you suggesting to them how they could play with toys in a different way.

PLAY

Useful resources

[Nursery rhymes and rhyming games, BBC Tiny Happy People](#)

[Letters and Sounds](#)

[10 Number Recognition Games](#)

[DfE Phonics guidance](#)

[National Literacy Trust resources for parents](#)

[Walk and talk trail, National Literacy Trust](#)

[How Parents Can Play with Kids, LEGO](#)



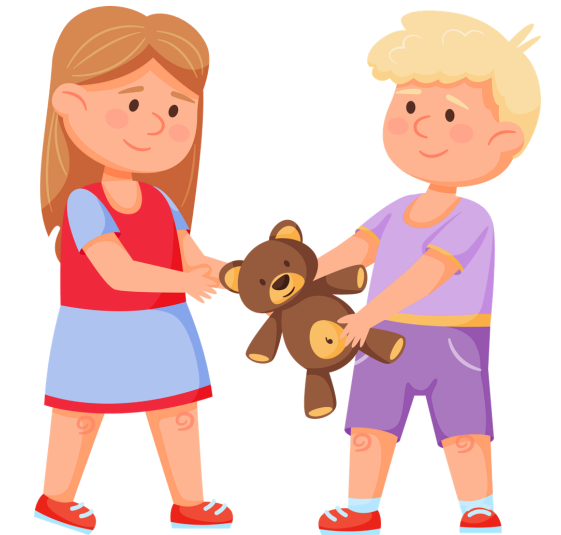
Play BC

Personal, social and emotional

Some children may be very easily upset or show signs that they find it hard to form trusting and secure relationships with others. This may be because they have not had the opportunity to form a secure attachment with a primary caregiver and will need to do so in their early years setting. You may notice some children find it very hard to separate from the adult who drops them off in nursery.

Some children who have experienced adversity or early trauma may be very withdrawn or seek to be highly independent.

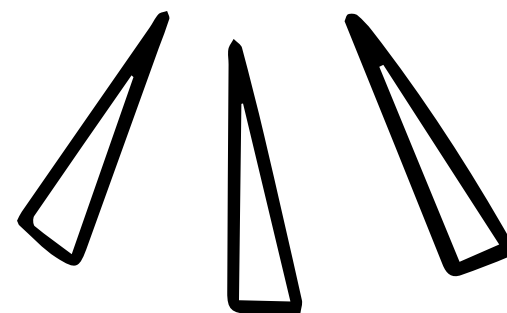
Some children, including those with social communication difficulties, may find it hard to understand their emotions and display more extreme emotions, including becoming very quickly frustrated if something doesn't happen as they would like.



In the early years we tend to refer to 'Social, Emotional and Mental Health' as personal, social and emotional development. Social and emotional difficulties can look different in different children so knowing children individually is the best way of spotting if there is something that they are struggling with. Children in the early years are at the beginning of developing social and emotional skills yet for those with long-term additional needs we may see difficulties early on.

Some children find it hard to take turns and share. Some children may show delayed social interaction skills which makes it hard for them to play with other children and start to form friendships. A sense of belonging is really important and missing out on this can feel isolating for children.

Some children can find it hard to follow boundaries and expectations and behave in ways that can feel challenging to manage. Behaviour is usually a form of communication and what we see on the surface tends to be just that, surface behaviour. Young children can find it very difficult to tell us what's going on for them when they're feeling frustrated, upset or worried.





If I don't feel safe and secure easily

Make sure the environment is calm and organised, and routines are consistent

Take the time to build relationships. Identify things the child likes and spend time doing them together. Focus on key person time

Give me a lot of reassuring non-verbal messages as well as telling me how much you like me and care about me



If I need a lot of attention from adults

Remind me that you are thinking about me even when we're not together. You could give me something to look after that makes me feel special and held in mind

Remember how unsettling transitions can feel and give me lots of warning and explanations

Have a look at page 14 about relational approaches



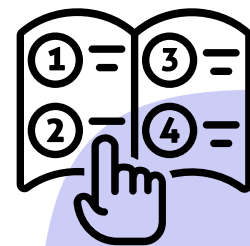
If I find it hard to stay calm

Make sure that all staff have an understanding of behaviour as communication. Look for triggers that cause me to become upset and try to reduce these

Create safe, calm spaces and support children in knowing when to use these. Talk to children about staying safe

Talk to parents and carers about co-regulation and support them to use strategies at home

Talk to children about how they feel 'name it to tame it' and teach all children regulation skills.



If I find it hard to follow instructions and stay safe

Build a culture of reflection amongst adults to help them respond effectively to challenging behaviours

Reinforce when I make good choices and talk to me about safety and how much you care about my safety

Give me choices and remind me of what I should be doing in a positive way



If I struggle to play with other children

Focus on structured turn-taking games for children who find this hard. Include things they're interested in to encourage them to play with others

Use peer buddies to make sure everyone has someone to play with

Model language for turn-taking and social play "can I join in?"

Behaviour

I WANT TO BE ABLE TO:

- Listen and follow instructions so that I stay safe
- Be kind to other children
- Pause before I do something that might be unkind or unsafe
- Understand things that I shouldn't do in nursery
- Accept when an adult tells me I can't do something
- Understand different ways to behave in situations to keep me and others safe
- Build friendships with other children
- Learn from situations that didn't go to plan
- Feel that adults understand me

In nursery you could support me by ...



Restorative conversations

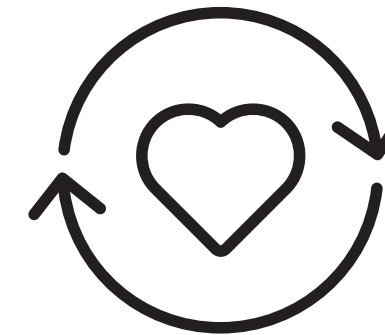
If something has happened and I need to learn from it help me to understand what went wrong. Help me to understand how I might be feeling and how others might be feeling through talking to me but also drawing pictures and using stories and other visuals to help me understand. Help me to make up for something by supporting me to say sorry.

Group problem solving

Set up group conversations to get children to suggest strategies that their friends could use to follow rules better or to feel calmer during the day.

Positive handling

If I need to be held by adults when I become upset to keep me safe make sure key adults have had training and that there is a plan written down. Always warn me that you are going to hold me.



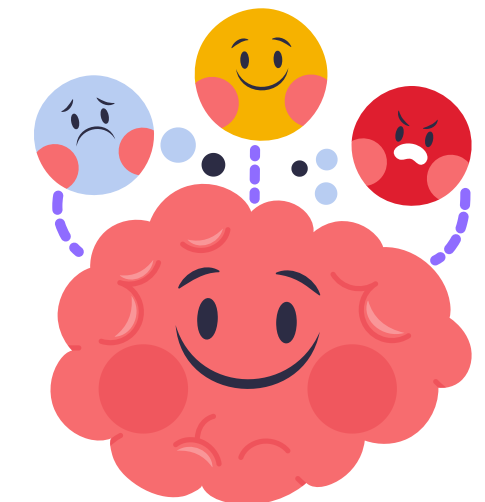
Behaviour analysis

Observe my play and try to work out what I am trying to communicate through behaving in a certain way. Is it that I don't know how to play with other children, but I want to? Am I anxious about certain things? Is this the only way I know how to get adult attention?



Support play with other children

Model simple play scenarios and language to use during play and gradually increase children into play.



Social skills

I WANT TO BE ABLE TO:

- Have a back and forth interaction with an adult or child
- Play alongside other children and be ok that we're using the same toys
- To notice other children and what they're doing
- Share toys with some reminders
- Have some understanding of how others feel
- Feel confident interacting with others
- Take turns during play
- Make friends
- Feel a sense of belonging



In nursery you could support me by ...

Modelling

Children learn social skills through observation and modelling. Use adults and other children to model good play skills during small group play. Positively reinforce when children get it right using explicit praise.

Teach me how to get involved

Model and practise language a child can use to get involved in play e.g., "can I have a go?", "do you want to play with me?". Get me to practise this with an adult and support me to use this language with other children.

What is a friend?

Use circle time to talk about friendships. Use books, puppets and interactive activities to get children thinking and talking about what a good friend is.

Structured play

Set up play in which there are more rules to help children practise turn-taking. This could be a board game or game outside with rules which you play first with the child by themselves, slowly introducing in other children. Try different games or different resources until you find something I enjoy.

Puppet play

Use toys, puppets and other characters to role play social situations. You can get my to help problem solving when things go wrong for these characters and think with me about what I have learnt from this.



Joint play

Play alongside me, copying my play before then starting to change how you play. When I notice this and show joint attention encourage me to take turns. We could build a tower together or roll a car backwards and forwards.



Visuals

A visual prompt such as a coloured counter showing me it's time for my go (green) and time to wait (red) might help me to remember these rules.

Emotional regulation

I WANT TO BE ABLE TO:

- Use simple words to talk about how I am feeling
- Have a visual way of understanding emotions
- Feel like adults understand how I feel
- Realise that it's ok to experience big emotions
- Feel like adults at home and in school use the same language to talk about feelings
- Feel good about myself
- Feel proud about who I am

In nursery you could support me by ...



Emotion coaching

Attune to how I am feeling, name and validate how I'm feeling and then help me to think about how I could respond. Before you do this make sure you're calm though – an adult who isn't regulated won't be able to regulate me.

Stories

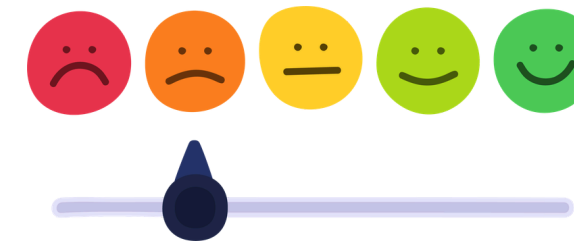
Use characters in books to help me understand more about emotions and use lots of language to help me understand different feelings.

Keep calm kit

Help me to compile a toolbox of strategies or activities that will help me to calm down and which I can find when I need them. This could include bubbles, dough, fidgets, breathing activities, headphones or even yoga poses!

Puppet play

Use puppets to talk about big feelings and to give them names. It will help me to see emotions described in different ways because I will find it hard to learn about them just through talking.



Visuals for emotions

Use activities like Zones of Regulation or the Incredible five-point scale to show me the differences between emotions. I will need to be taught about these individually or in a group and will need to you to model these lots before I can use them for myself.

Check-ins

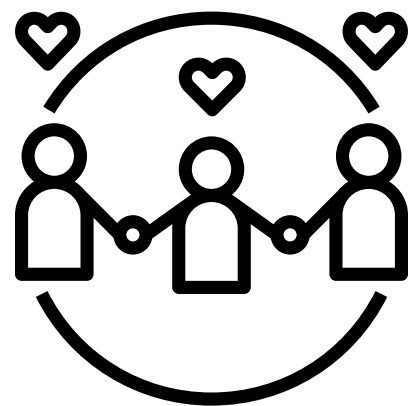
Talk about emotions during the day and several times a session help me to pause and think about how I'm feeling. As I get better at noticing my emotions, I will find it easier to manage them.



Separation anxiety

I WANT TO BE ABLE TO:

- Be ok saying goodbye at the start of the day
- Feel safe when I'm not with my main carer
- Get settled quickly in nursery
- Play with other children and not rely entirely on adults
- Build a secure attachment relationship with my key person.
- Feel welcome and valued in nursery
- Feel prepared and ready at the start of the day



In nursery you could support me by ...

Transitional objects

Allow me to bring something in from home that helps me to feel safe in nursery. This could be something special to me or something that reminds me of my family.

Attachment aware

I don't trust that you care about me when I can't see you so you might need to remind me a lot. I also might show you that I care about you by being unkind. It's really important that you don't unintentionally reject me if I do this. I might find it hard to share your attention with other children but it's important that I learn this is ok.

Greet me

Make sure that you're waiting ready and with a big smile for me when I arrive in the morning. Knowing that you're excited to see me will make a big difference.

Adapt your style

I might find it difficult to be praised directly, so it might be easier if you tell another adult about something I did well so I can hear it.

Building trust

I might need you to create some situations in which you show me that I can trust you. This could include remembering something I like or something I did and asking me about it. Remember that it might take me longer to build a relationship with you than you expect.





Behaviour

At home you could support me by ...

Social skills*

Boundaries and consistency

It's not easy to tell children no, but it is important that they know and feel that adults are in charge. Remind me that you set the rules but acknowledge that I may find this frustrating.

Timers and visuals

Try using a countdown timer to show me when something is going to end or a visual like a timetable to show me what's happening during the day. If I feel prepared, I'm likely to be much calmer.

Don't sweat the small stuff

Try not to pay much attention to silly things that I might do, instead tell me what I should be doing instead and give me some time to make the right choice.

Turn-taking

Model and practise taking turns at home. Start by only expecting me to do a couple of turns before building this so I can do more.

Ready, steady, go

Build anticipation by waiting before saying "go" until I'm focused on you and showing good attention.

Play alongside

Play nearby to me and talk about what you're doing in your play. Make it really fun and exciting so that I become interested in what you're doing.

Remind me

I might not pick up on social rules automatically so you may need to teach me. If I forget things like not shouting out or taking things without waiting my turn remind me first rather than telling me off. Afterwards help me think about why it's important to do the thing you want me to do.

Emotional regulation



Emotion coaching

Attune to how I am feeling, name and validate how I'm feeling and then help me to think about how I could respond.

Visuals

Help me to recognise different emotions by using visuals. This could be photos or graphics of facial expressions. As I get better at understanding the words for emotions and recognising them in others, I'll find it easier to regulate myself. Stick it on the fridge so we can look at it throughout the day.

Regulate you first

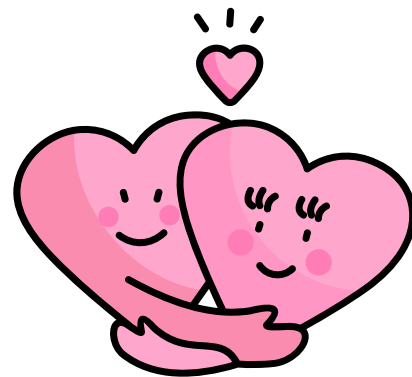
If you're stressed, I'll feel stressed so try and calm down before you help me to calm down. It might be that sometimes you tell me you need a minute before you can help me or that just pausing and recognising how you feel is enough to then mean that you can help me.



At home you could support me by ...

Supporting worries and anxieties

At all ages children are very responsive to the emotional reactions of their parents, but this is especially true in the early years because children cannot so easily understand their own emotions so look to their parents and replicate theirs. Worries that you have your child is likely to pick up on and mirror.



Try to **avoid reassuring me** that something won't happen or isn't as bad as I think it is. Instead talk to me about worries, how these are normal and the types of things we can do to make them feel smaller.



Praise



Praise me for the effort I put in rather than the outcome. It can feel stressful to be judged against high expectations all the time but knowing that if I try my hardest it's good enough is reassuring.

Separation anxiety can come from the child or the parent, or both of them. Sometimes we can work out what has caused separation anxiety and sometimes we can't but it's usually quite challenging for the parent as well as the child. Creating a consistent goodbye ritual can be comforting at drop off time.

When you leave your child try to keep it as brief and positive as possible. Chances are they settle into nursery quickly once you've gone, but then longer you stay and you both become more emotional the longer it will then take for them to settle. Get [some more ideas here](#).



Learn from what adults at nursery say to me and try to **use the same language and approaches at home**. Find out what calms me down. This could be rocking, cuddling or singling.

Useful resources

[The Colour Monster](#)

[Resources for under fives | Anna Freud](#)

[EEF | Personal Social and Emotional Development](#)

[ABC Chart with guidance](#)





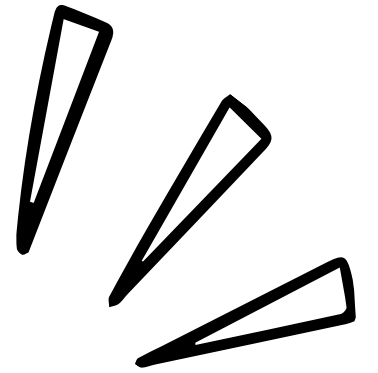
Some children have coordination difficulties such as Dyspraxia and Developmental Coordination Disorder (DCD) which impact on their coordination of fine and gross motor movements.

Some children have complex medical needs or suffer from chronic illness which impacts their physical health and may necessitate them to have a healthcare plan and specialist equipment.

Children may have a range of physical needs which impact on their learning or their access to the learning environment. These may be specific to a certain sense or impact on all of their movements. For these children daily living tasks may be difficult and they may show delays in their self-care skills.

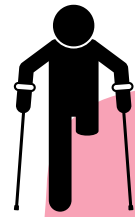
Some children may have a sight or eye condition which affects their vision and is known as a visual impairment (VI), others have a hearing impairment (HI) impacting on what they can hear and their understanding of language. Others may have difficulties across multiple senses and have a multi-sensory impairment (MSI).

Some children may have a physical disability (PD) in which their motor skills are impaired such as cerebral palsy which means that they may need adaptations made to the environment around them or special equipment.



Some children, including those with social communication needs, may show sensitivity to sensory information. In noisy or busy environments, when these children don't understand the routines so well, they may become upset or distressed. At other times they may be under sensitive to sensory information and seek this out maybe by running, touching objects, climbing or making certain noises.

Some children with social communication needs are delayed in how well they develop self-care skills and are later to be toilet trained. They may also have a delayed understanding of risk and behave in ways which are unsafe because they do not understand the consequences.



If I have physical needs which impact on my movement

Ensure that physical access to all learning spaces, indoors and outdoors, is safe for me. This could be through using ramps and making sure that changes in surface are easy to see and having some adapted play equipment

Make sure you have an Intimate Care policy in place



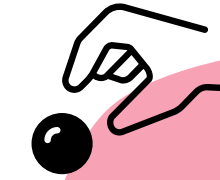
If I process sensory information in a different way

Have quiet spaces or quieter times during each session and regularly audit the environment

Make sure there is daily messy or dry sensory play

Have a range of objects and activities available for sensory processing and make sure there are ways I can get the sensory feedback that I need safely

Talk to children about why things happen e.g., why hand driers are loud, why fire alarms go off

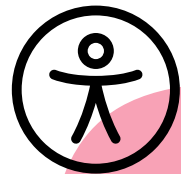


If I find tasks using small movements difficult

Have available dough to mould, threading activities, tweezers to grab, pegs, ribbons etc.

Practise pouring, picking up and cutting at snack and lunchtimes. Make sure you model each time until I get the hang of it

Messy play using paint, water or foam and using brushes or my hands



If my big body movements are delayed

Plan circle times, outdoor play, use of parachutes etc. to practise gross motor skills

Make sure there are clear spaces for me to walk, run and crawl on a range of different surfaces

Have opportunities outdoors for balancing, climbing, swinging, jumping, pulling, pushing, hanging, spinning

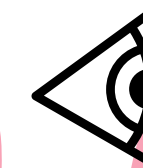


If I have difficulties hearing

Make sure you use my radio aid, that I am wearing my hearing aids or my hearing band. Charge the radio aid EVERY night

Say my name before speaking to me and check I'm looking at you. Don't speak too quickly and use lots of expression in your voice and your gestures. Check I've understood

Make sure my friends know the best way to speak to me and everyone is familiar with some basic signs



If I have difficulties with my sight

Make sure I am wearing my glasses!

Have glasses in the role play area so that my friends can also try them out

Remind my friends to tidy up and not leave things out which I might not see

Think about things which may need to be made bigger for me

Sensory processing

I WANT TO BE ABLE TO:

- Feel calm in nursery and ready to learn
- Get involved with messy play
- Be able to tolerate when it gets busier or when other children are playing near me
- Be ok when there are loud noises
- Seek out sensory feedback in safe ways
- Ask for a break
- Choose activities that help me to feel regulated
- Be confident choosing different toys in nursery



Our Day Nursery

In nursery you could support me by ...



Adapt the sensory environment

Carefully observe and analyse how I respond throughout the day to different types of sensory information. Remember that I have seven senses which compete sight, hearing, taste, smell, touch, vestibular (movement and balance) and proprioception (body awareness). If any of these feel overwhelming for me give me space to recharge to avoid sensory overload.

Safe messy play

Build my confidence with sensory play slowly by individually supporting me to explore resources like messy pouches. Zip bags are good as I can see what's inside, otherwise covering something I'm not sure about touching with cling film to begin with. Plan individual and small group activities which focus on messy play.

Give me sensory feedback

Identify the type of sensory information I need and help me to experience this safely. The types of things I might need could include things to bang, noises or music, toys that are reflective or spin, things I can squeeze, rip, or chew. Other things that might help: a wobble cushions, spinning chair, trampette, swing, ear defenders, wearing a body sock, having a weighted toy on my lap.

Little by little

Help me to build up my tolerance to messy play or sensory activities by planning activities to start with something I like and then become a bit more challenging for me. I might just need to watch you doing the activity for a few days before I feel confident to have a go.

Movement breaks

Before I have to sit down, and concentrate make sure I have a chance to do something physical or sensory. This could be doing some jumping, using heavy objects or calming down with some glitter jars.



Build my knowledge

Talk to me about things I am seeing, hearing, touching, feeling. This will help me to make links between sensory experiences and language so I can advocate for myself as I get older.



Deafness

I WANT TO BE ABLE TO:

- Know what's going on in the environment around me
- Understand what is about to happen next
- Follow instructions
- Join in with group activities and hear what others are saying
- Interact and play with my friends
- Interact with adults
- Ask for help if needed
- Start to take responsibility for any devices I need to support my hearing
- Start learning initial sounds
- Be developing my speech skills
- Feel confident even in noisy, busy settings

In nursery you could support me by ...



Signing

Make sure my key people are regularly signing (BSL or Makaton) and start to teach all the adults and children in my room some basic signs. Make sure I can also see your face when you're talking so that I can start lip reading.

Use of visuals

Use visuals to help me understand tasks/instructions/key words. Have pictures of spaces in the nursery to refer to, e.g. outside, toilets, lunch time. Use visuals for songs and stories so I can be included with understanding what song is coming up next or if there is a choice I can be included in making a choice.

Safe spaces

Remember that the day in nursery will be more tiring for me because I'm having to work harder to process everything going on around me. I may need breaks or some time to rest in a safe space.

Radio aid

If I have a radio aid make sure you use it correctly and have been shown by my Teacher of the Deaf how to use it. Make sure you know how to check it if it doesn't seem to be working.



Talk to my parents/carers and ToD

Find out from adults who know me well what works best for me in other environments and how to tell if I can't hear something well. My Teacher of the Deaf will also have lots of recommendations and advice.

Play

Look for dolls who need the same equipment as me to build my confidence, or books with dead characters.

Quiet spaces

Audit the environment and see if there is anything you can do to make hearing easier for me or to improve the acoustics. Fitting curtains and carpets and removing hard surfaces can really help. When there is focused learning make sure it's quiet enough and provide some small group time.

Get further support from the Cognus HaVES team who can offer training around assistive listening devices and other strategies



Vision impairment

I WANT TO BE ABLE TO:

- Play with a range of toys in nursery
- Follow visual cues as well as language to understand what's happening
- Be independent moving round nursery
- Find toys to play with independently
- Know how I am talking to
- Feel confident going out in the garden
- Feel safe moving around and negotiating different surfaces
- Play with my favourite toys without the lighting being uncomfortable
- Make friends and play with my friends

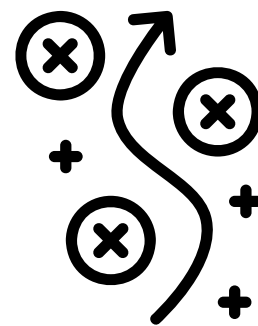
Get further support from the Cognus HaVES team including regular liason with QVTI to support.

In nursery you could support me by ...



Adapt the environment

Check every day that it's easy for me to move around the room without things tripping me up or getting int the way. Use coloured tape to show me clearly if there is a step and reduce glare from windows.

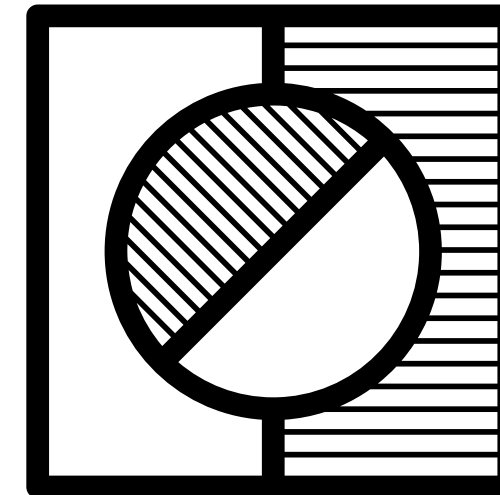


Safe spaces

Remember that the day in nursery will be more tiring for me because I'm having to work harder to process everything going on around me. I may need breaks or some time to rest in a safe space.

Talk to my parents/carers

Find out from adults who know me well what works best for me in other environments and how to tell if I can't see something well.



High contrast resources

Make sure there are books available which are high contrast and where possible use high contrast tones of colours for resources I am using e.g., light and dark.

Keep track

Ask about the lighting and whether there are certain types of light which help me see better. Note down the types of things I can see well and in which sorts of environments so we can do more of this.

Enlarge resources

During story time make sure that I'm close to the front, use big books that I can see or other props so I can become involved. Make sure that anything printed is made bigger for me.

Physical needs and motor skills

I WANT TO BE ABLE TO:

- Be more confident in my walking and running
- Pick up small items
- Use a range of toys independently
- Start mark making
- Turn objects around
- Balance on a beam
- Climb on the equipment
- Use a scooter or tricycle
- Use both of my hands together to complete an action
- Throw and catch
- Use a paint brush or crayon



In nursery you could support me by ...

* Handling plans

Make sure there is a plan in place to help me move around the setting. Adults will need extra training to make sure that they can do this safely.

Risk assess

Take the time to make sure that you know parts of the environment that might not be safe for me and work out how to make sure these don't pose a risk to my safety.

Bikes

Teach me how to use the bikes or trikes. I might need more time to learn than other children so if we should practise when the other children are inside.



Avenue

Obstacle courses

Build me an obstacle course or circuit outside which gives me the chance to practise all the movements I find tricky. Different heights and objects to climb or balance on are great.

Crossing the midline

Give me activities to do which encourage me to move my limbs across my body e.g., touching my left leg with my right arm, waving ribbons, riding a scooter.

Instruments

Making music can be a great way of practising fine motor skills. Encourage me to practise starting, stopping, changing the volume and using different tools to make noise.



Green Wrythe Nursery

Care plan

Make sure there is a plan in place to support my medical needs or any health conditions.

Self-care skills

I WANT TO BE ABLE TO:

- Be able to use a spoon to scoop up food
- Be able to use a fork to pick up food
- Sit with my friends whilst we're eating
- Have a drink by myself
- Know when I need to use the toilet
- Know the steps I need to follow to wash my hands
- Follow visuals showing the steps for certain self-care routines
- Get myself dressed and undressed with more independence

In nursery you could support me by ...

* Backward chaining

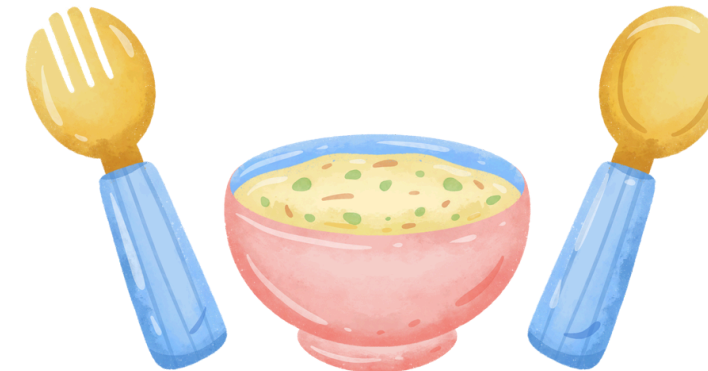
Teach me new skills by breaking down tasks into smaller steps, teaching me the last one first. Once I've mastered this teach me the next step all the way until the start of the task working backwards.

Social stories

Use visuals including social stories or checklist to help me learn about new skills. Think about what the barriers are that are stopping me do something, for instance we might need to work on building a different skill first.

Adapted materials

Give me chunky pencils, cutlery and other adapted bits of equipment that are easier for me to hold and use.



Independent eating

Start with finger foods and be ok if I get messy! Chunky cutlery is good to start with, as well as non-slip plates or bowls and making sure that I'm comfortable with how I'm sitting. A loaded spoon will be my first step until I'm ready to move onto a fork. Having cutlery to play with is a great way for me to practise.

Toileting

Make sure you share the toileting policy with my parents/carers so that everyone is helping me to develop these skills in the same way. You may need to increase ratios in my room to support my toileting.

If I seem reluctant to use the toilet can you check it out? It might feel too smelly, dark or busy for me. I might also be scared of the flush or the hand dryer. Backwards chaining can be a good way of teaching children to use the toilet and working with my parents/carers is a must to make sure you're all expecting me to do the same things. [Read more about toilet anxiety here.](#)



Glaisdale Nursery



Sensory processing

Safe sensory information

Make sure you have a range of different toys and tools which help me to feel regulated. This could be equipment that gives me some big body movements, things that help noisier places feel quieter, exciting toys to watch or things that help me feel calm after a lot of excitement.

Time to de-compress

When I get back from nursery or from a trip out with you, I might need some quiet time. Sometimes it's ok if this is a screen but try not to always give this to me as there are lots of great toys which do the job just as well. Lights that change colour, calming music or things I can fiddle with in a quiet space will help.

At home you could support me by ...

Deafness

Background noise

Make sure you limit other things I might be able to hear when you're speaking to me or if we're reading a story together.

Advocate for me

It can take nursery or school staff a while to get used to using a radio aid, but you know how important it is for me. Give them any top tips you have learnt and check with them until they get into the habit of charging it every day.

Visuals

Use signs, gestures and pictures as well as speaking to me. You'll get to know which I seem to understand best so if you can tell the adults at nursery that would really help me.



Visual impairment

The right environment

Set up a well lit space with lots of things to explore. Move toys around so there is always something new for me to explore and use the knowledge you have about my vision to adapt things e.g., present objects to the side I can see best.

Increase independence

If I can't find toys or if toys roll out of reach take me to the toy rather than bringing me the toy.

Quality talk

Talk to me about what I'm playing with. Tell me what it looks like, what colour it is, and what I'm doing with it.

Sensory play

Find ways we can play with materials that make good noises or feel different. This could be playing outside or playing with things inside which you might not need think are fun – but I do!

Make adaptations

Add scraps of fabric to my favourite books to make them tactile or draw on the pictures using Tippex or use strings to outline the pictures so I can see them better.



At home you could support me by ...

Physical needs and motor skills

Moving together

Show me different movements and let's practise them together. This could be actions in songs I like, jumping in puddles together or marching around to a beat. I would love to make up a dance routine with you or for us to have a special clap that only we know.

Cooking together

Baking involves lots of motor skills. Arm strength is needed to stir and fine motor skills are needed to use cutters. Get me to practise opening jars, using cutlery safely and spreading.

Small movements

There are loads of activities around the house that can support fine motor skills. Toys that need to be wound up, popping bubble wrap, even picking up raisins and putting them into a bowl.

Self-care skills



Visual timetable

Create a timetable for our daily routines that has a picture of someone doing each of the tasks. Involve me in checking what we need to do next. You could use this for the whole day or otherwise for new routines I'm learning e.g., getting dressed. If there are things on the timetable, I don't really want to do it might help to give me something like a sticker to make me more motivated.

Using dolls

Sometimes it's easier to practise a skill on someone else first! Encourage me to wash and dress a doll, to brush their hair and to get them ready for nursery.



Humpty Dumpty

Eating

Make sure there aren't many distractions when I'm eating and that you're giving me a lot of attention and motivation to keep trying. I might need different cutlery that's easier to hold (ask Nursery), I might also need a mix of things I can finger feed before I try using cutlery. Remember it's better I make a mess and begin to eat independently than still need your help.

Drinking

A cup with two handles is the way to start before I can then try using a beaker I hold with both hands. If you only fill the cup up halfway that will help me control it a little better. If I'm sitting up straight, I'll have the best chance of success.

Going to the loo

If I have dry nappies for long periods of time and seem to poo at regular times this is probably a good time to start seeing I can be toilet trained. Talk to me about using the toilet and ask me questions about if I need to go. Alert me to when I have gone so that I get used to understanding the sensations. Most importantly give it a go and don't give up!

Useful resources

[Cognus HaVES Team](#)

[Toileting and autistic children, NAS](#)

[Training for professionals, RNIB](#)

[Early years education, NDCS](#)

[Success from the start, NDCS](#)

[Deafness and me: A toolkit for early years practitioners](#)

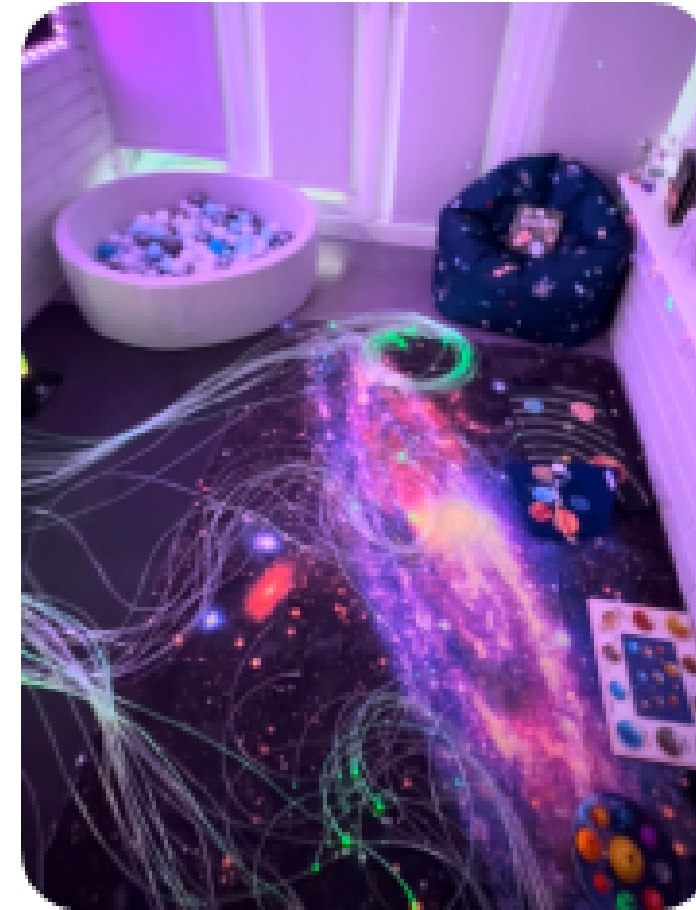
[NSPCWT | Sensory Processing Difficulties](#)

[An online course](#) for professionals to learn more about sensory processing

[Facilitating play for children with vision impairment, RNIB](#)

[Move with me leaflet](#)

[Advice and Resources – Cognus Occupational Therapy](#)



Bumpsa Daisies



Green Wrythe

Other useful links

Early Years and Childcare website DfE

Sutton Local Offer – information for parents. This website will explain Sutton's local offer for children with SEND.

Sutton Health and Care (Health Visitors, speech and language therapy, occupational therapy, dietetics, physiotherapy)

National Children's Bureau (NCB)

The Sutton Trust-EEF Teaching and Learning Toolkit. An accessible summary of educational research which provides guidance for schools and settings on how to use their resources to improve the attainment of disadvantaged pupils.

For more information about inclusive practice, please refer to the Whole Setting Inclusion Audit.

The Early Years SEND Advisors are your first point of call for all inclusion questions and support. They can support with all areas of need and recommend other relevant referrals where appropriate. Contact eysend@cognus.org.uk

NASEN, Whole School SEND resources

Foundation Years

Early Support Developmental Journals, NCB

Council for Disabled Children

EEF Teaching and Learning Toolkit

PlayWise Learning CIC

BBC Tiny Happy People

Start for Life, NHS

Early years child development training, DfE

Further Support



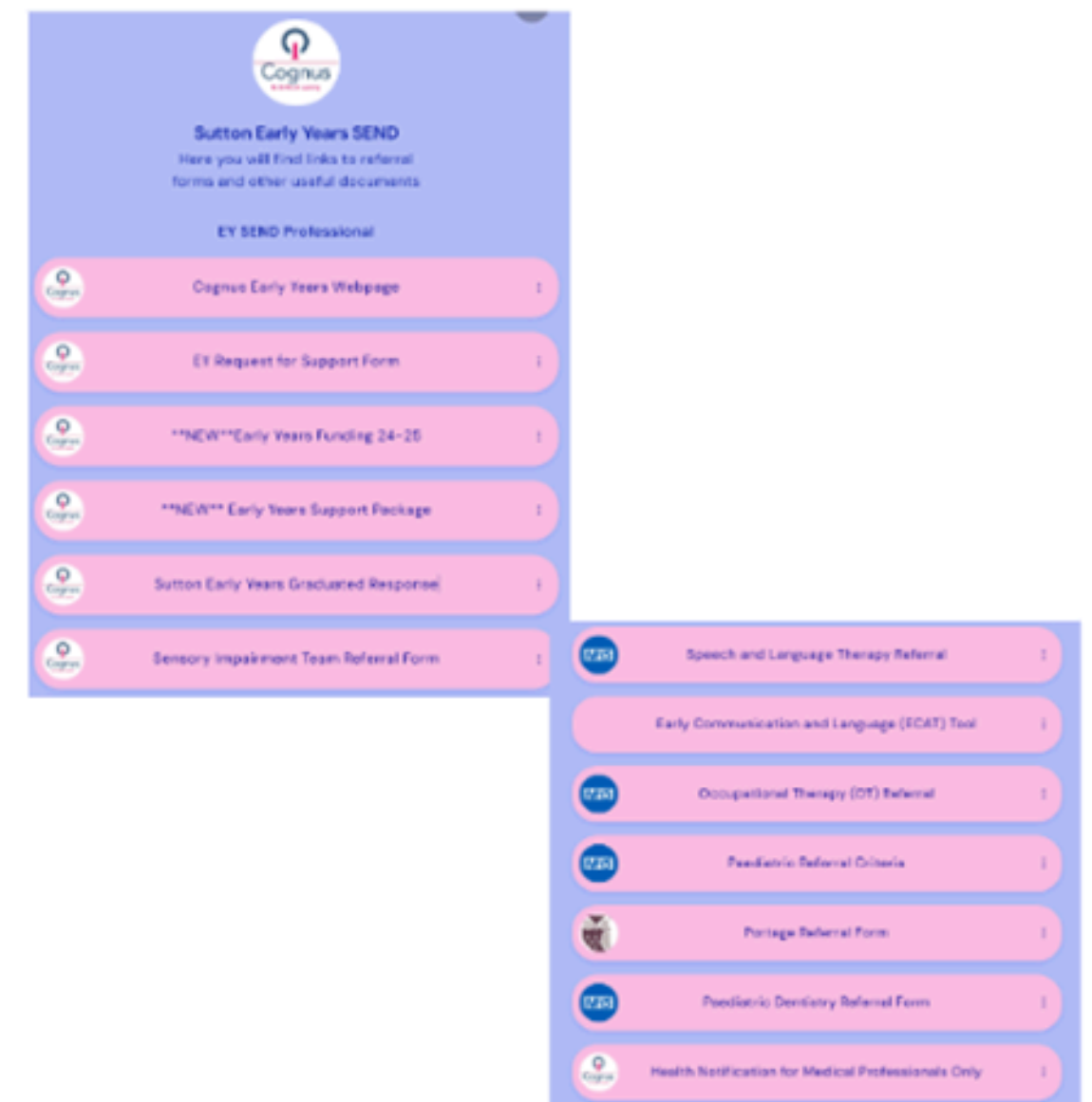
Scan the QR code to find out more information about the services available to settings in Sutton.



Further Support



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