



Penhill Playgroup

Local Offer

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

The staff at the setting communicate informally on a daily basis about any concerns we have and we also have regular formal supervision sessions and staff meetings where we are able to raise any worries or concerns. As we monitor your child's progress, we fill in a Progress Review sheet in their Learning Journal, which indicates the sorts of skills and activities a child usually achieves by a particular age. This can be useful to see, at a glance, whether your child is demonstrating the skills appropriate for their age. Even if they are not, this does not mean that your child has special educational needs or disabilities, because all children develop at different rates. It may just indicate to staff that this is an area of development we need to focus on helping your child to achieve and incorporate it into our planning.

If you have any concerns, you can talk to your child's key person or any member of staff, confidentially and together we can decide the next step to take, which may be a referral to another service, an agreed plan of action that both us as a setting and you at home will carry out, or finding out about other sources of help, support and information. Our Inclusion/Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (INCO/SENCO) can provide suggestions and advice regarding special educational needs, but we also value the contributions of all members of staff and the child's parents/carers.

How will early years setting staff support my child?

All children are allocated a key person, who has responsibility for building up a relationship with each key child and their parents/carers and for planning each key child's next developmental steps, based on their interests, skills and abilities. This work is overseen by the Manager. However, in a small setting such as ours, all the staff work very closely together, with all the children and communicate frequently with each other to support the development of each individual child.

All new children are supported to use the environment, its resources and to learn the setting's routines. All children are encouraged to independently choose what activities and resources they would like to use and staff support this educational play by sharing the experience with them, encouraging their thinking, social and problem-solving skills through talk and demonstration. At large group times, staff can offer individual support within the group, or will support the child to take part in smaller group activities. However, this approach is flexible, depending on the needs of the child and the circumstances of the group activity.

We try to follow the children's interests in our planning, although we do introduce themes over the course of the year, to enable the children to gain a wider understanding of the world around them.

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

Every child's needs are different and when staff plan activities and challenges for the children, they take into account the different starting points of the children, the skills that they have or are trying to learn. Activities can be adapted to meet the needs of all children so that everyone can access the curriculum, but in different ways, appropriate to their own individual needs and interests.

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

As we observe and monitor the children at Playgroup, we fill in a Learning Journal for each child, which gives details of their learning and achievements. Part of this journal includes a progress review sheet, which indicates the sorts of skills and activities children usually achieve by a particular age. These are useful, at a glance, overviews of each child's progress and are used to indicate to staff, which skills areas we need to focus on when we plan activities for the children. As a setting, we monitor children's outcomes, to ensure that they are all making progress, regardless of their individual starting points.

You are very welcome to look at your child's Learning Journal and are encouraged to contribute to it. We like to involve parents in their child's learning, and once a term, we hold an afternoon or morning where parents/carers are invited to come and spend time with their child at the setting, looking at their Journal, talking to staff about their progress and meeting other parents and carers.

We also have a parent's file of useful information and leaflets about all areas of a child's development and you are welcome to look through these and take copies of anything you feel would be helpful to support your child's learning.

If you have any questions or concerns about supporting any aspect of your child's learning and development, please speak to a member of staff and we will try to work together to enable you to achieve this.

What support will there be for my child's overall wellbeing?

All children have a key person who is responsible for building a relationship with both their key child and the child's parents/carers. However, in our small setting, we all work very closely as a team and although we have a key person system, all staff aim to build up positive relationships with all the children, so that a child, or their parent/carer can turn to any one of us for help or support.

We involve children in their learning, listening to what they say and observing what they do. We like to use their interests to inform our planning of resources and activities and enable them to

have a sense of ownership over the setting, by taking on board their suggestions for the role play area, books, games, songs and rules etc.

All staff have been deemed suitable to work with children and have completed a DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service) check before they start work with children, as set out in our Employment and Safeguarding Policies, as part of our recruitment process. Each member of staff has to sign an annual declaration about their continued suitability to work with children and we have a set procedure to follow should any concerns be raised.

We keep a record of any personal care changes that occur during a session, noting the date, time and member of staff involved. We have a suitable mobile changing unit that can be used, although this is located in the main hall as there is no suitable, accessible specific changing area. Due to the nature of changes (usually toileting accidents), the majority of older children are changed in the toilet area.

Some children require medication such as inhalers or eye drops to be administered at Playgroup, or to have items such as Epi-pens to hand. Staff are able to administer these once the appropriate paperwork has been completed by the parent/carer, giving us permission. Any medication administered is noted, checked by a second member of staff and parents informed. Our Medication and Accident Procedures Policy covers this in more detail. Please ask to see a copy, if needed.

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

We can access online information and advice from West Sussex and can apply for Targeted Setting Support (TSS) if we feel we need further help, advice or support. We are also able to contact Health Visitors, obtain advice from and refer to the Speech and Language Therapy service, make initial referrals for Family Support and set up an Early Help Plan. If appropriate we can find out about other local sources of help and support, through the West Sussex Early Help service and signpost parents and carers to other services too.

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

The Manager and the SENCO/INCO (Special Educational Needs/Inclusion Co-ordinator) have attended specific Role of the SENCO/INCO Training and training about the Special Educational Needs Code of Practice. The SENCO/INCO also attends the termly SENCO/INCO Network meetings to keep informed about changes and to share ideas and concerns with colleagues.

2 members of staff have completed specific Epi-pen training.

1 member of staff has attended an Autism awareness in Early Years course.

2 members of staff have attended a course on Working with children with English as an Additional Language and Including All Children.

The Manager has attended a Working with Vulnerable Families course, a number of disability awareness courses and has experience of working to provide information for families, where there is a child with a disability or additional need.

1 member of staff undertook Stage 1 PECS (Picture Exchange Communication System) Training in 2018 and has cascaded her training so that all staff have an understanding of Phases 1 – 3.

4 members of staff have completed an introduction to Makaton course and all staff use a few basic Makaton signs every day at registration/circle time.

3 members of staff, between themselves have attended the Early Language Development Programme training, Talk, Talk, Talk – Supporting Early Communication, Practical Communication Activities, Developing a Communication Friendly Early Years Setting and Talking Clearly, to support the development of the children's Speech and Language.

We subscribe to the West Sussex Early Years Training Scheme and take advantage of many of their courses throughout the year, as well as having access to Educare online training. As a need for training is identified, such as when a new child with specific needs starts at the setting, we will endeavour to incorporate this into our current training and development plan.

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

We will look at each child and each trip individually in order to accommodate any particular needs that they might have, involving the parents/carers in the planning, where possible and appropriate. We will endeavour to offer children with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) the same opportunities as all the other children at Playgroup.

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

The front door is not wheelchair accessible as there is a big lip to get over. However, there is a portable ramp to enable access into the hall from the side of the building and into the garden outside. There is currently no accessible toilet, although we would like to work with the hall owners to look into the feasibility of achieving this in the future.

We have a mobile changing unit, located in the main hall, as there is no suitable, accessible specific changing area.

The kitchen is also not wheelchair accessible, but children are not allowed into the kitchen during sessions, unless there is a special cooking activity, but these can be adapted to be done in the hall in a suitable space and at a suitable height instead.

We have tried using visual clues around the setting to enable children to gain a better understanding of what each area is used for, but this needs some more work in order to become really effective.

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

All children joining our setting are invited to come in for a visit with their parent/carer before they start. If necessary, a number of pre-start visits can be made to help aid the transition into the setting. These visits enable both the parent/carer and child to gain an understanding of how the setting works and to become familiar and confident with the staff, children and routines.

We also run a Toddler Group/Stay and Play session twice a week on Tuesdays and Fridays during term time 12.30pm – 2.30pm which many of our children attend before starting Playgroup, in order to become familiar with the hall, the staff, toilet facilities and mixing with other children.

When moving on to school, the Manager or Key Person will attend Transition events to pass on information about the children to their receiving school, and, if necessary, arrange additional Transition meetings with the parents and school too.

Teachers from the schools that we feed into usually visit our setting from May onwards, to meet the children they will be teaching in September. Our main feeder school is Seaside Primary Academy and we try to arrange several visits there on Thursday afternoons, during the children's last 6 months with us, as part of our regular weekly outings, in order to enable the children to get used to going into a school building and knowing what to expect. Previously, we have been lucky enough to use the lower school library, Reception play area and Mud kitchen on these visits.

During the second half of the summer term, we talk a lot about moving on to school and have school uniform available as part of our dressing up on a daily basis. We have also purchased book bags and a selection of uniform, including jumpers, cardigans and PE tops for our feeder schools, which we send home overnight with each child moving on to school, to enable them to practice putting on uniform and talking about school with their parents/carers. The book bags also contain information for parents, a suggested book list from the library about starting school and details of what we do and what parents can do to support their child in getting ready for school. We also have books from all the local Primary Schools, which the children are encouraged to look at and take home overnight, if wanted, which provide lots of pictures and talking points about their new schools.

Most schools offer transition or settling/meet and greet visits for children in the summer term before starting school. Key Playgroup staff may also be able to attend these to support a particular child and it may be possible for the child to attend all settling/transition visits available to enable them to become familiar with the people and environment, if it is thought to be in the child's best interests and with the agreement of the school.

If we feel a family would benefit from attending a Starting School Transition group or activity (if it is being run over the summer), we will refer and encourage them to attend. We also take advice from support agencies such as Speech and Language Therapists or Educational Psychologists who may advise using particular strategies, which we will then implement and follow.

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

We always try and maintain a higher than needed staff ratio so that extra support is on hand at all times. Where possible we may apply for Inclusion funding to ensure that we can maintain this higher staff ratio and use it to ensure those that children requiring extra support, receive it.

As a Registered Charity, once we have paid rent, fees, wages and bills, it is up to the group to decide how the money is spent. The Manager may suggest purchasing specific items and need to get approval from the Committee for this. Items purchased are considered carefully and most items will benefit all the children at the Playgroup in some way.

If we are advised to purchase specific items on the recommendation of a specialist agency, we will always investigate the feasibility of it, applying for grants or other financial assistance if required.

We also encourage all parents of children claiming 3 and 4 year old Free Entitlement, to fill in the Early Years Pupil Premium (EYPP) claim section to ensure that all children eligible for this money, receive it. Once we know which children are eligible, the staff team will make suggestions about effective ways of spending the money, which may be resources, training or staff time aimed specifically at that child, or general resources, visits or other enhancements, which will benefit all children. Where appropriate, parents will be consulted about what they feel would be an effective use of the money to support their child.

If your child is aged 3 or 4, receives Disability Living Allowance and claims Free Entitlement funding, the setting may be eligible to claim a Disability Access Fund annual payment of £615, to help with additional costs, equipment, training etc. Parents/carers and any other professionals involved with the child, will be consulted and involved in making a decision about the most effective use of this money.

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

Staff in the setting will discuss the best way forward, with advice from the Inclusion/Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (INCO/SENCO), Manager and parents/carers. Where the Targeted Setting Support Team or another outside agency such as Speech and Language, Child Development Centre or Health Visitor are involved, we will endeavour to incorporate any suggestions they make about ways to support your child in the setting.

There are regular, at least termly reviews of each child's progress and regular informal communication with parents/carers and between staff so that any concerns or issues can be raised and addressed promptly.

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

As a parent or carer, you can talk to your child's key person or any member of staff, confidentially, if you wish, about any concerns, compliments or other comments that you have about the setting.

We have a steering committee made up of parents/carers and supporters of the setting, which meets approximately once a term. Any parent or carer is able to join the committee, but must agree to have a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check undertaken and to be registered with OFSTED. The steering committee is responsible for the running of the Playgroup and parents take on roles such as Secretary and Fundraiser, as required.

We welcome any support or ideas for our fundraising events and you are also welcome to volunteer in the setting, if you would like and are able to. We have previously had parents coming in to support our theme of looking at other countries and cultures by cooking food from their own cultural background for the children to try.

We also understand that it is important for parents of children with Special Educational Needs or Disabilities to have opportunities to meet together as a source of mutual support, and will happily enable this to happen at the setting, if other parents are agreeable. Alternatively, we will do our best to put you in touch with existing sources of support, such as those listed below.

Who can I contact for further information?

Katie Ayling is the Manager of the setting and can be contacted at Playgroup on 01903 767513 or emailed: supervisor@penhillplaygroup.org.uk. There is also information on our website www.penhillplaygroup.org.uk

Sabrina Back is the Inclusion/Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (INCO/SENCO) at the setting and can also be contacted at Playgroup on 01903 767513 or via the same email address as above.

Useful contacts and sources of information in West Sussex

West Sussex Local Offer website: <http://westsussex.local-offer.org>

Family Information Service Tel. 01243 777807 www.westsussex.gov.uk/family

Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities Information, Advice and Support Service SENDIAS
Tel. 03302 228555 <https://westsussexsendias.org/>

Reaching Families Tel. 01903 502649 www.reachingfamilies.org.uk

West Sussex Parent Carer Forum Tel. 01903 726188 www.wspcf.co.uk