



PRESS RELEASE

March 2011

TRACKS awarded 'outstanding' by Ofsted

TRACKS autism, the Stevenage based specialist early years centre for children with a autism and related conditions, has achieved an Ofsted 'outstanding' award.

The early years provider was highly praised by Ofsted for providing very specialised one to one support that enabled children with an autism spectrum disorder (ASD) start to realise their potential, an issue at the very heart of the Government's SEN Green Paper released this month.

TRACKS is one of just three such centres of its kind in the UK.

"Our daughter Jasmine adores going TRACKS, it's the only place she runs into, literally runs into the staff's arms, which for a child with autism who has problems forming attachments is a huge leap forward" said Lisa Dutton, whose three year old daughter Jasmine attends TRACKS. "Jasmine has formed a strong attachment to Tracks and the fantastic staff. She could happily spend all day everyday there, I could too. TRACKS has given us a real insight into Jasmine and her condition, the highly specialised staff have helped us understand her and highlighted the issues that she faces. They have helped immensely with ideas to use at home, as well as helping develop Jasmine's speech and social skills. We are very lucky that it's close to us as there are so few centres in the UK. I know one mum who regularly travels over 30 miles so her child can attend."

Ofsted praised TRACKS' highly skilled team for enabling children with a range of complex additional needs to enjoy a truly

individual programme of learning experiences tailored to their very specific requirements. The report highlighted that as a consequence children that attend make significant progress towards the early learning goals in all six areas of learning.

“Their knowledge and expertise is so valuable because it is not available in pre-schools,” explained Claire Sawczenko, whose four-year-old daughter Eden also attends TRACKS. “Since Eden started attending TRACKS in September she has grown in confidence and will now instigate and lead play and is able to share with other children. That difference I would put down to the tremendous work TRACKS has done with my daughter. Mainstream nurseries do their stuff but TRACKS will focus specifically on these things, which my daughter struggles with because of her condition. However, no matter how Eden is struggling in her life, she always wants to go to Tracks, it’s a safety net for her. ”

Mike Shaw, Chair of TRACKS autism believes the report reflects the huge amount of work that everyone puts in.

“This is a tremendous achievement for the children, parents and staff as TRACKS prepares to celebrate its 10th Anniversary in 2012,” he said. “The report captures the values and principles that underpin our work along with the commitment and dedication of our experienced and dedicated staff. Hertfordshire is lucky to have such a unique provision. TRACKS does not receive any Government funding or grants, so our appreciation and thanks to all those who have supported us in 2010 by providing time, talents or funding.”

The report particularly singled out the critical role the close relationship between staff, parents and carers has played in the centres success.

“We obtain essential information about each child, such as, favourite activities, important people in their lives and specific methods of communication children use,” explained Nan Cannon-Jones, TRACKS’ Principal with responsibility for autism and one of the founders of the pre-school. “This means staff can plan thoroughly and very carefully to support children. Staff and

parents frequently share important information about children's progress which keeps parents fully involved in their child's learning."

For many of the parents the early years centre, which works with children aged between two and six years, provides invaluable help and support.

"TRACKS is so welcoming, the staff and the environment are clearly child centred and supportive which is so very important on the difficult days, when you are struggling with your child," added Claire Sawczenko. "When I needed the support they allowed my daughter Eden to attend an extra session at very short notice. They're always there for you."

The highly effective relationships formed by the staff with other settings and professionals involved with the children and their families were also highly praised in the Ofsted report. They contribute extremely well to supporting children's welfare and learning, it said.

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Parents interested in finding out more about TRACKS autism can email racks123@tiscali.co.uk, visit www.tracks-autism.org.uk or call 07955918248 to arrange a visit or to book a place on the centres open day on May 10th.

Notes

1. Visit tracks-autism.org.uk email: tracksautism@gmail.com
2. The Government's SEN (special educational needs) Green Paper, published March 2011, highlights the need for early intervention to help children with special educational needs achieve their potential. Tracks is an outstanding example of this in action.
3. ASD is a social and communication disorder. People with autism find it difficult to tell people what they need, and how they feel, to meet other people, to make new friends, and to understand what other people think.

4. TRACKS autism was established in 2002
5. There are over 500,000 people with autism in the UK - that is 1 in 100. Together with their families, that is over two million people whose lives are touched by autism every single day. (source: www.nas.org.uk)
6. images/logo available on request
7. Tel : 07955918248