

Early Years Autism Policy

Mission Statement

We strive to ensure a positive future to all our children and families

Aims

Our mission is to provide early intervention through high quality Early Years practice for young children with Autism and related difficulties.

To ensure that families access expert advice and a range of support.

To lead the development of best Autism practice and early intervention.

Admissions

In the Early Years Centre we cater for children aged between 2.5 to 5 years

Children do not require a diagnosis or referral; however, their main presenting need is Autism or related difficulty.

Our criteria is based on the needs of the child matching the specialist provision we offer.

Places are usually allocated on a first come first served basis using the date on the which the completed application pack is received.

The Early Years Centre at Tracks Autism is open for 37 weeks a year with sessions available:-

Monday – 9.30am to 12.30pm (assessment session)

Tuesday – 9.30am to 2.30pm (school ready session)

Wednesday – 9am to 12pm and 1pm to 4pm.

Thursday – 9am to 12pm and 1pm to 4pm.

Friday – Closed

The Early Years Centre is accessible to ensure that any child who may have mobility difficulties can be accommodated.

Each session is 3 hours long and children may attend 2 sessions per week.

We operate as an early years nursery, providing access to the EYFS as well as our own specialist curriculum.

Key Areas of Learning

Communication

Developing play

Social interaction

Personal and social development

Physical Development

Support for sensory processing difficulties.

Physical Environment:

- TRACKS is a purpose built building with low arousal and clearly defined areas for learning.
- Equipment and resources are put out and packed away to assure focus on the activity at hand.
- Limited resources are accessible to the children to encourage communication.
- The quantity of resources are reduced to maintain focus and avoid sensory overload
- Physical equipment is available at all times under direction of our Occupational Therapist to optimise levels of sensory regulation.
- We have specific distraction-free rooms available for one to one and small group teaching.
- We have high levels of adult supervision to maintain children's safety at all times, due to their lack of understanding of danger.
- Resourced at matched to the interests of each child.

Sensory

Our mission at TRACKS autism is to identify the underlying sensory difficulties which are impacting upon the development of essential motor and academic skills.

The Occupational Therapist role within this is to:-

- Provide training and support to the staff in order to identify and respond to the child's needs and to assist them with developing skills.
- Assist with environment modifications to support sensory needs.
- Identify sensory needs through observation within the classroom environment.
- Support parents to identify and support the child's sensory needs within the home and community environment.
- Support the development of a sensory diet for each child.

We also set up a continual development of Sensory Circuits that helps children achieve a "ready to learn" state. Sensory circuits are a series of activities designed specifically to wake up the senses. They are a great way to energise or settle children into the day. (See Sensory Policy)

Communication

Communication is fundamental to learning and is a crucial aspect of what we provide at TRACKS. We use a Total Communication approach within the setting which means that every child benefits from having access to all forms of communication to support their understanding of language and routines.

We aim for all communications strategies to be embedded into the setting and activities so that the children have every opportunity to learn and imitate a communication approach. (Please see Communication Policy)

What we do at Tracks

Pupils

- Our sessions follow a clear structure, which is supported by a visual timetable of photographs and objects of reference for each activity.
- 'Now and Next' boards are also used, with either photographs to help their transition to the next activity.
- Objects of reference are used to transition into adult directed activities i.e. child is shown a bottle of hand wash to indicate hand washing.

- The day is planned to allow regular periods of movement and sensory breaks.
- The day begins with a period of up to, an hour and a half, of child initiated play. Activities and resources available are planned according to each child's interests and yet changed regularly.
- Toys and activities are developmentally appropriate to each child
- Each child has an assigned key worker, who supports them during child initiated play to teach her the appropriate use of toys and simple play sequences.

Parents – Parents are regarded as essential partners in helping their children to learn. Staff are available at the beginning and end of every session to talk to parents. We support parents with DLA and EHCP applications. Parental guidance and support includes regular coffee mornings, information sharing, a website, the use of Tapestry (online record), copies of the children's termly targets and reviews and an open door policy at all times, books and resources to borrow, support during transitions and outreach to other settings and training workshops.

Other Professionals – we offer an in-reach service welcoming outside professionals and sharing good practice.

