

TAYLORSTOWN CROSS COMMUNITY PRESCHOOL LTD.

Special Educational Needs (SEN) Policy

It is the policy of this playgroup to provide places for the integration of children with special educational needs subject to:

- The view of the child's parents.
- The ability of the playgroup to meet the child's needs.
- The efficient education of the other children in the playgroup being assured.
- The efficient use of resources.

The code of practice (CoP) for Special Educational Needs defines 'special educational needs' as:

"a learning disability which calls for special educational provision to be made"

Children in need:- a child is deemed to be in need when:-

- The child's developmental progress in the playgroup will be affected by their general health status;
- His or her health or development is likely to be significantly impaired, or further impaired, without such provision;
- A Health and Social Services Trust (HSST) considers that a child has special educational needs;
- The developmental progress gives rise to concern;
- A child has significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of children his or her age;
- Has a disability which hinders his or her use of educational facilities and/or;
- Is specially gifted.

When applying for a playgroup place parents should state if their child is receiving help from any of the following:

- Child Development team
- Educational Psychologist
- Occupational therapist
- Speech therapist
- Social Services

Contact may be made to any of the above with parental consent if deemed appropriate.

The successful integration of children with special educational needs requires careful and detailed planning before admission.

Prior to admission

- It is important that the child's parents are willing to use this place.
- It is essential for the leader and staff to gain as much information as possible from the child's parents and other professionals involved with the child.
- It is essential to ensure that extra classroom assistance or equipment is available if necessary.

Admission of child with special educational needs

After consultation with all concerned with the child, the child will usually be admitted into the playgroup in the same manner as the other children, keeping in mind:

- The child's reaction to previous experiences of separation from parents.
- The extent of the special educational need.
- That it may be preferable not to admit a child with special educational needs until most of the other children have been settled, depending on the particular need. It may be possible to admit them earlier if classroom assistance is available.
- That the child's admission may have to be more gradual than usual with the parent perhaps having to stay longer. The length of stay shall be increased, as the child is ready.

It is important that the parents of the children with "special educational needs" should be seen as active educators of their children and be very involved with the education of their child in the playgroup. There will be regular contact with the leader to exchange information and extra support shall be given to those parents if necessary.

Integration of a child with special educational needs

- It is recommended where possible, the child with special educational needs will follow the same routines and have access to the same experiences and materials as other children. It is however recognised that those needs may result in him/her having additional attention and/or the use of special facilities and equipment.
- The identification of special difficulties may result in the leader devising individual learning programmes for the child and the special educational needs.

- It is important that good working relationships are established between professionals working with the child in order to share information and appropriate skills.
- Care will be taken to ensure that the child is socially integrated, with the help from all members of staff.
- Systematic observations and records are especially pertinent for children who have special educational needs. They are necessary for the children who already have been or are likely to be statemented. Procedures laid down by the board will be followed.

THE FIVE STAGE PROCEDURE

Stage 1

The playgroup leader raises a concern that a child may have special educational needs. She then consults with the child's parents.

The playgroup staff shall:

- Fill in a record of concern.
- Offer differentiated teaching strategies.
- Monitor and review progress.

The SENCO (playgroup leader) shall:

- Ensure that the child's name is included in the SEN Register.
- Discuss with the child's Key Worker and assess the child's needs.
- Offer advice and support as necessary.

Stage 1 action should be reviewed to see if the child's difficulties have been resolved. If the strategies have been successful in addressing the difficulties then the child's name shall be removed from the register. If the child's progress is still unsatisfactory after two reviews then the child should progress to stage 2.

Stage 2

The Key worker shall:

- Be responsible for working with the child in the classroom carrying out an individual education plan (ACTION PLAN STAGE 1) arrived at in conjunction with the SENCO and shall monitor on a regular basis in the educational plan. The child's parents should be involved as much as possible and given on how they may contribute to their child's educational plan.

The SENCO shall:

- Work with the key worker in assessing the child's difficulties and offer advice on a suitable education plan.
- Work with the key worker in planning, monitoring and reviewing the child's progress.
- Seek advice, having sought agreement with the child's parents, from the child's Health visitor/GP to ascertain if there are any medical reasons for the child's special educational difficulties.
- Keep the child's education plan under review in the consultation with the child's key worker and parents, where possible.

If the strategies employed at stages 1 and 2 have not been suitable to meet the child's needs then the playgroup, by agreement with the parents will discuss with the leader the accessibility of the child getting support from services outside the playgroup (e.g. Educational Psychologist, Child Development team). If this is accessible the child will move onto stage 3.

Stage 3

Provision at this stage involves support and advice from agencies outside the playgroup. However, the emphasis is still upon providing support in the classroom context.

The key worker will:

- Draw up a new educational plan for the child.
- Monitor and review progress.

The SENCO will:

- Support the key worker and liaise with external agencies with regards to a new educational plan.
- Initiate a stage 3 referral.

Support services for children include the following:

- Support service for pre-school children.
- Support services for children with specific speech, language and communication difficulties.
- Support services for children with specific learning difficulties.
- Support services for children with pervasive developmental disorder.
- Curriculum Advisory and Support service.
- Educational Psychology Service.

Stage 4 – Statutory Assessment

The key worker and the child's parents at this stage continue to work together to implement individual educational plans.

Requests for statutory assessment can be requested by:

- Designated officer within the Health and Social Services Trust.
- Educational Psychologist.
- Leader following stage 3 assessment.
- The child's parents.

Advice shall be sought from:

- SCMO – medical and social.
- Principal of the child's school – educational.
- Educational Psychologist – psychological advice.
- Such other services as may be prescribed.

Children will not usually be eligible for stage four assessment unless earlier stages have been complete completed and the action and the strategies employed at the earlier stages have been documented.

Stage 5 – Statements

On receipt of advice from all concerned the Board will decide whether or not a statement is required.

Sometimes a child will start playgroup with a statement already in place. These children will need to be reviewed annually to make sure the needs of the child are being met and to consider the appropriateness of future provision.

In the playgroup the key worker and SENCO will carry out the review.

The annual review process may be divided into the following basic stages:

- Seeking advice and gathering information.
- Preparation for the meeting.
- The review meeting.
- The meeting.

This policy has been adopted by the preschool committee at a meeting on

Witnessed by _____ **(Chairperson)**

This Policy was reviewed on _____

Witnessed by _____ **(Chairperson)**

Complex Co-ordinator _____ **Date** _____