

## **The Lawns Children's Nursery's approach to supporting special educational needs and disabilities**

Please see below for answers to commonly asked questions regarding Special Educational Needs & Disabilities at The Lawns Children's Nursery.

### **How does The Lawns Children's Nursery know if children need extra help and what should I do if I think my child may have special needs?**

At The Lawns Children's Nursery we have a team of staff that are skilled and experienced in working with a diverse range of children and are well placed to tune in to any signs or indicators that a child may require additional support.

At The Lawns Children's Nursery we operate a Keyperson system, with each child having a Keyperson who is responsible for monitoring their development and to act as the first point of contact with the family.

Their role is to develop trusting, sensitive relationships with parents and children to enable respectful sharing of information.

If you have any concerns about your child's development you can ask for time to discuss this in private with your child's Keyperson. If your child's Keyperson has identified a possible individual need they will discuss the matter with you and plan together to support your child's learning and development.

If you are not happy that the concerns are being managed and that your child is still not making progress you should speak to The Lawns Children's Nursery's Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCO).

The Nursery's trained SENCO can offer advice and support to the Keyperson and practitioners. The SENCO will liaise with other professionals to seek advice and support in meeting individual needs if required, with parents' permission.

If you are new to the setting or are thinking of joining the nursery and you have concerns over your child's development, or if they have been diagnosed with inclusion requirement, an initial meeting will be set up with the SENCO to discuss your child's requirements prior to starting. This enables The Lawns Children's Nursery to liaise with the relevant professionals or outside agencies and get support in place if required, prior to the agreed start date of your child.

### **How will The Lawns Children's Nursery team support my child?**

During your settling-in sessions at The Lawns Children's Nursery, you and your child would be introduced to their Keyperson and the SENCO to enable everybody to share information about the strengths and needs of your child.

Parents will have the opportunity to accompany their child on at least one visit to help settle them and develop a relationship with the Keyperson.

The Lawns Children's Nursery's' SENCO will explain how children's individual needs can be met with advice from the local authority's Area SENCO or other outsourced professionals (detailed below).

The SENCO will co-ordinate provision for children with inclusion requirements, liaise with and advise other practitioners, liaise with you the parents, the local authority Area SENCO and team in Somerset, educational psychologists, speech and language therapists and other health services.

At The Lawns Children's Nursery we carry out regular observational assessments of all children in our care.

These are linked to the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) document, produced by the government] which can help the practitioners identify individual needs of the children, their next steps for learning, and how to plan suitable experiences for each child.

Since each child develops in his/her own way the evidence gathered is based on a variety of observational methods; i.e. written observations, photographic and video observations, and examples of work. This evidence is cross-referenced against the child's individual progress overview on an ongoing basis.

The next steps for learning are devised following a meeting with the parents or carers where common interests and goals are discussed and agreed.

Reports from healthcare professionals such as Health Visitors, Speech & Language Therapists which help identify children's individual needs may be used.

Staff at The Lawns Children's Nursery will identify individual needs and plan next steps, accessing additional support from others where necessary and make applications for additional funding, if appropriate. When required a care plan will be developed, which will

allow the child to have the opportunity to reach his/her full potential. This is often carried out in conjunction with outside agencies.

We work closely in partnership with you the parents, providing you with information and agreeing the best strategies to support your child.

At The Lawns Children's Nursery we provide a daily diary (via eyLog) for all children under two years old so that parents are fully aware of the experiences their child has been involved in during the day. For children two years old and over, staff give families verbal feedback.

We operate an 'open door' policy and encourage practitioners to develop strong liaisons with parents at drop-off and collection as we believe they are critical to building parent partnerships and to helping support children's development. Telephone calls or e-mails can be used to communicate with parents during the day, if the parent prefers.

### **What support will there be for my child's physical and emotional wellbeing?**

At The Lawns Children's Nursery we make a point of listening to children. We often listen for their ideas and hypotheses but our approach of actively listening with all our senses ensures that we also listen deeply to children's emotional and welfare needs.

During the settling in process we will request that you complete an 'All About Me' form and a 'Communication Profile' for your child which help us meet their individual needs.

The Keyperson and other staff in your child's room build relationships with your child and family and they provide personal care with a deep sense of respect for all children.

The staff are also trained to administer medicine as required.

### **What specialist services and expertise are available at, or accessed by, the setting?**

At The Lawns Children's Nursery all staff have received child development training and have experience of working with children within the Early Years' age range.

You and your child can access a number of services available in the local area linked to any needs your child may have. These are accessed in the first instance through your Primary Healthcare Service and include the following:

- Physiotherapist
- Occupational therapist
- Speech and language therapist
- Get Set Services

### **How is the decision made about how much support my child will receive?**

At The Lawns Children's Nursery we will make the decisions about how much support your child will receive in conjunction with you as parents. We are able to monitor your child's needs through Keyperson's observations in the setting and we then discuss them with you and The Lawns Children's Nursery's' SENCO.

Observational assessment linked to the EYFS and knowledge of child development will be used to identify what support is required. Extra support will be put in place, if necessary, with the aim of enabling your child to become independent within the environment. On-going partnership working with parents by the setting and other professionals involved with the child/family will support the decision making process.

The SENCO will advise on the process of applying for extra support. The funding process will identify the level of need based on evidence we submit to a panel from Somerset Local Authority, along with other observations from professionals working with your child. The next steps will be agreed and with you as parents, The Lawns Children's Nursery's' SENCO and your child's Keyperson at review meetings and will include advice about how parents can support their child at home.

### **How will The Lawns Children's Nursery prepare and support my child to join the setting, transfer to a new setting or the next stage of education and life?**

## **Starting at The Lawns Children's Nursery.**

We offer all new families a series of settling in sessions prior to starting at The Lawns Children's Nursery, these generally happening in the 2 weeks leading up to the agreed start date.

We do not limit the number of settling in sessions children and families can attend, but generally each family has about 3 of these sessions. They normally last 1-1.5 hours and are offered at various times across the day for example lunchtime, mid-morning etc. We plan these sessions with each family on an individual basis to ensure we meet their needs.

These sessions are designed to allow the child to start to familiarise themselves with the environment and build relationships with key members of staff and their peers. Every child is assigned a Keyperson and their role will be explained at the settling in sessions.

The Keyperson will form a relationship of trust and support with the parent and the child during these sessions and will ask for care plans and 'All About Me' forms to be completed to help us identify the children's needs, interests and to discuss if any agencies are involved in the child's development.

If required, staff will attend training related to a child's needs before they attend the setting. In addition we would arrange to meet any healthcare professionals involved in order to support a child's transition into the setting. We also seek to ensure that parents and Keyperson agree a consistent approach to give continuity of care between home and nursery.

## **Transition to school or next setting**

If your child is transitioning to school or moving to a new setting, your child's Keyperson and SENCO will arrange a transition meeting with the new setting and any other professionals that have been involved in your child's care.

These meetings are designed to ease the transition and to ensure all relevant care plans, have been shared prior to the move and to enable all relevant professionals to discuss your child's emotional well-being and share strategies that have been successful.

All relevant documentation will be passed onto the new setting, such as Learning journals, care plans and other relevant documents, with parental consent.

A photo book can be created of the new setting or school for your child to share with parents and Keyperson before the move. We have found that the use of role-play with school uniform and books is a good way to help a child become familiar with new routines.

## **How are The Lawns Children's Nursery's resources allocated and matched to children's special educational needs?**

Funding and two-year-old funding can be applied for to support any child at The Lawns Children's Nursery. These additional funds can support the nursery to meet any child's additional needs.

The resources at The Lawns Children's Nursery are deliberately open-ended to support all children's exploration and investigations.

Sensory play equipment is available and we use visual aids.

### **How accessible is the setting environment?**

The Lawns Children's Nursery is made up of old designed buildings and listed buildings (Chard) and as such there are some limitations in our layout.

We are happy to discuss the layout and limitations of the building with prospective families.

### **How will you help me to support my child's learning?**

At The Lawns Children's Nursery we communicate between staff and families through: daily conversations with the parents when they collect / bring their child to nursery, a 'Time to Talk' session after a month, parent consultations, e-mail, presentations, and via our website and social media.

We can agree a comfortable form of communication with individual families which may include verbal, written or e-mail.

We actively encourage parents to share their knowledge of their child with the staff verbally or through observations via eyLog.

The setting SENCO and Keyperson will discuss with you how to support your child's needs outside the setting and how they are supporting your child's learning and development within the setting.

If your child has additional needs the setting will work in partnership with the team supporting your child and explain to parents how they are acting on the advice from these professionals.

### **What training have the staff had in supporting children with special educational needs?**

The Lawns Children's Nursery SENCO has attended a broad range of training sessions and conferences covering a wide spectrum of educational needs but is not a specialist in any one need.

The SENCO also attends regular SENCO meetings to keep their knowledge and understanding up to date and to share good practice with other SENCOs

### **How will my child be included in experiences away from the setting?**

At The Lawns Children's Nursery we can take children on off-site outings, if it is relevant to their interests. All activities are planned around all children's individual needs and abilities, and we include risk assessments of the route and venue as standard. Wherever possible we seek to ensure that our approach is inclusive, including off-site outings.