

# **SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND DISABILITIES (SEND) LOCAL OFFER**

## **Overton Children's House**

### **1. 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?**

We continually observe, assess and plan for all children in the setting. We use this information on how the children are doing and relate it to developmental norms and staff experience. Each child has an individual plan of Montessori activities which the key worker and team use to track their progress and activities. We continually feed this back to parents through daily feedback, daily news board, parent consultations, learning journeys and use of My Montessori Child application. If you have concerns about your child you can speak to your key worker, SENCO or manager. We have an open door policy and parents are welcome to ask to visit at any time. We will happily discuss any concerns you may have however big or small. If you, and we, feel it would be helpful, we will refer for further advice to the area inclusion team or other specialists e.g. speech and language therapist, Occupational Therapist, Health Visitor, Paediatrician, Physiotherapist . If staff identify concerns we will discuss these with yourself and the SENCO in the first instance and determine what we agree is the next course of action.

### **2. How will early years setting staff support my child?**

We have a small mature and experienced nurturing team of staff with high staff ratios. This ensures consistency and enables the staff to get to know your child well. We offer home visits before your child begins at the setting and flexible settling in sessions. Your child will be allocated a key worker to help them settle in and develop a strong relationship. The Key worker and the team will continually observe, assess and devise an individual activity plan for your child. The team will engage your child in individual and group activities and observe them working alone and in groups with their peers.

One of the principals of the Montessori philosophy is that as staff we ensure that the environment is adapted and prepared for all the children in our care. We ensure that we offer a rich range of stimulating activities for all children at whatever level they are at. This enables the children to build their independence and be self-directed in selecting the activities they wish to engage with. As Montessori staff we also adapt our approach to meet the individual needs of the children as required and we follow the lead of the child.

We have experienced SENCOs who can offer extra support and advice to staff and parents as required. We will endeavour to provide a supportive and inclusive setting for all children whatever their needs. We work with other external agencies to provide the support each individual child

needs. We have several multilingual staff that are able to speak French, German and Afrikaans. We are able to use our experience in working with multilingual children to support children who speak other languages as well.

### **3. How will the curriculum be matched to my child's needs?**

All children are observed and through assessment of these observations these form the basis of the children's individual education plan. We use a computer based system, called My Montessori Child, to record this which the parents have access to at all times. This ensures that each child has an education plan to meet their own development needs. The system can be added to by all staff as they observe and assess your child. The system also records how your child is doing in relation to the EYFS early learning goals. Each child also has their own learning journey that they are encouraged to contribute to. In our Montessori setting the children are encouraged to select their own activities which are then adapted by the staff to meet the learning goals of each child at that time. We regularly reflect upon our setting and interactions with children to ensure that we are meeting the educational needs of each child in the setting. The curriculum available to your child is limitless and the activities available are constantly changing to meet the needs of the children in the setting. We also include suggested activities from other agencies e.g. Speech and Language Therapists into the child's education plan.

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

Parents are always welcome to visit the session and we have an open door policy. Staff will give daily feedback to parents as the children leave. Also the news board, learning journey, and email newsletters tell you what the children have been up to. We have regular parent consultations and parents are able to request to talk to staff at any time about their child. Parents have access to the My Montessori child computer system that enables them to see what their child has been up to at any time and can be accessed securely by the parents anywhere. This also provides suggested activities to do at home or you can ask staff for ideas too. We provide a parent library of magazines and books to give further suggestions of ideas on supporting your child's learning. We are also able to offer parent workshops of areas of learning, e.g. Phonics. We are also able to lend resources to parents to help home learning. We regularly hold events such as open days, sports days and festive celebrations which give an informal insight into how your child is doing. We have a handbook available for parents use about supporting children whose first language is not English.

## **5. What support will there be for my child's overall wellbeing?**

At the heart of Montessori philosophy is respect for the child whatever their needs. The staff team are experienced in supporting children with a variety of differing needs. We record incidents and accidents which are shared with the parents as soon as appropriate. We have an administering medicines guideline within our health and safety policy. Daily health and safety and risk assessments are carried out.

We have a behaviour management policy and will use calm role modelling and techniques to help the children to express their emotions constructively. We assist the children in understanding their emotions through role modelling, role play, puppets, group and 1:1 discussion. We are able to offer a quiet space to reflect upon emotions which can be confusing for young children. We maintain a high staff ratio and the staff know each child well and the strategies that help each child. Children are encouraged to verbally express their emotions with each other and are supported by staff to achieve this, based on their level of communication and understanding.

Parents are able to inform staff verbally, via email or the My Montessori Child system any significant events outside the setting that may impact upon the child's well-being. We have undertaken training in the past to meet specific health needs e.g. epipen and we are happy to undertake any other specific health needs training required. We are able to provide a nut/egg free environment.

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

We are able to access extra specialist support via the area inclusion team. We have had support from the portage team, SALT, autism outreach worker and community nurses in the past. One of the staff members has Occupational Therapy experience and two staff members have counselling qualifications. The SENCO's have extra specialist knowledge and experience in working with children with SEND. They have worked with children with global delay, cerebral palsy, learning disabilities, down's syndrome, autism including aspergers syndrome, hearing loss, social, emotional and behavioural difficulties and physical disabilities. One staff member has Makaton experience and basic training. We have experience of supporting several bilingual children.

## **7. What training have the staff supporting children with SEND had or are having?**

All staff are experienced and we have a high proportion of highly qualified and experienced Montessori staff. The setting manager holds a Montessori foundation degree. Several staff have Montessori Diplomas. All Staff attend first aid, food hygiene and safeguarding training. The SENCO staff have extra training and experience in working with children with SEND. Staff have had training in counselling, Makaton, autism, behaviour management and Occupational Therapy. We have multi-linguistic staff who speak fluent French, German and Afrikaans.

## **8. How will my child be included in activities outside the early years setting including trips?**

Parents are informed of any activities outside the setting and are always welcome to join us. A risk assessment is carried out prior to all activities and appropriate support will be provided to ensure that all children are able to attend. We maintain high staff ratios on outings and may have parent helpers to ensure fun for all.

## **9. How accessible is the early years setting environment? (Indoors and outdoors)**

Overton Children's house is in a large refurbished hall. It has level access throughout including the large spacious garden and vegetable patch. It has an accessible toilet. All the materials are at child height so that they are always accessible to the children. The Montessori environment is ordered and uncluttered and children are encouraged to return items where they came from so that they can easily be found by others. This can be helpful for those with a visual impairment or to those children who benefit from consistency. We have a handbook and support available for those children whose first language is not English. We are able to translate policies on request. We have Makaton trained staff available.

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

Prior to registering we suggest you visit the setting with your child before deciding if we are the right place for your child. We offer home visits to enable you and your child to meet staff in your own relaxed environment. This also enables us to start to get to know your child when they are relaxed. We ask you to complete an "all about me" form that tells us a little about your child's likes, dislikes and experiences. We offer flexible settling in sessions geared to you and your child's needs. If we feel your child would benefit we will suggest a graduated start for your child. If your child has a comforter, a transitional object, they are welcome to bring this to help them settle in and remind them of home. Children are allocated a key worker who works with them and will help your child to feel comfortable in the setting. As the staff team is small your child will soon get to know all the staff working with them.

To aid your child's transition to school we will liaise with the school with your consent. If required we will offer transition meetings and reports. We are able to share specific strategies and resources that your child has been using to smooth the transition to school. We can share their individual education plan with the school along with their EYFS and My Montessori child records. Your child's key worker is able to provide the school with any information they require to help your child settle at school. Some children like to come back to us after they have gone to school to tell staff and their friends how they are getting on.

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

Any allocation of resources is made on an individual basis dependent upon each child's needs. This may be the provision of specific equipment or activities or extra staff time. We are able to access a SEN resource library to try out possible suitable resources. How resources are used is constantly reviewed through reflective practice and may change over time.

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

All decisions are made in partnership with parents and staff, with guidance from outside agencies as required. Support is given to each child on an individual basis dependent upon their individual education plan and needs. This may include specific Montessori activities, 1:1 work with their key worker, group activities or specific resources e.g. visual timetable, talking tins.

The individual education plan (IEP) is formed based upon observations carried out by the key worker and team. This determines the individual achievable goals to be set these are agreed with parents in partnership. A child's IEP is reviewed at least half termly and either continued if the goals are still relevant and different approaches tried or new goals set. Daily feedback to parents will be given about how the child is doing and we are always happy to review things in greater detail at any time.

### **13. How are parents involved in the early years setting? How can I be involved?**

We welcome parental involvement in the nursery. Parents are encouraged to come in to read with the children, share a hobby or skill, do cooking or tell the children about their work. We have an open door policy where parents are welcome any time. We have a range of regular family events such as sports day, open days and seasonal celebrations. Parents are also welcome to volunteer in the setting on a regular basis.