

Sticky Fingers aspires to provide a safe, fun and welcoming environment for everyone. We offer children experiences to support their development, empowering them to reach their full potential



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09 Early years practice procedures

09.11 Identification, assessment and support for children with special educational needs and Disabilities (SEND).

The term SEN support defines arrangements for identifying and supporting children with special educational needs and/or disabilities. We are required to offer appropriate support and intervention and to promote equality of opportunity for children that we care for. Children's SEND generally falls within the following four broad areas of need and support:

- communication and interaction
- cognition and learning
- social, emotional and mental health
- sensory and/or physical needs
- We provide an environment in which all children with special educational needs (SEN) are supported to reach their full potential.
- We have regard for the Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice 2015.
- We designate a member of staff to be the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Coordinator (SENDCO) and give her name to parents/carers.

Accessibility.

- We aim to have all our resources throughout the setting accessible for the children.
- Staff plan activities that are inclusive for all.
- If a 'play plan' has been set in place to support your child, staff will work alongside this throughout the sessions.
- Because each child is individual we may feel it necessary to complete an access audit or additional risk assessments around the needs of your child. If it is reasonably possible the setting will try to put required changes in place to support your child.
- The SENDCO and lead practitioner will be open with families about what we can offer their child and if we are not able to support their child we will work with the local authority to have training or support to do this or to help find alternative provision.

Graduated approach - Initial identification and support (identifying special educational needs)

- Ongoing formative assessment forms part of a continuous process for observing, assessing, planning and reviewing children's progress.
- Children identified as having difficulty with one or more areas of development should be given support by applying some simple strategies and resources.

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- If despite applying differentiated strategies a child continues to struggle and is showing significantly more difficulty with learning than their peers or has a disability which requires specific adjustments, then the key person should raise a concern with the setting's SENCo/setting's lead practitioner and the child's parents.

Observation and assessment of children's SEN

Where a child appears to be behind expected levels, or their progress gives cause for concern, practitioners should consider all the information about the child's learning and development from within and beyond the setting.

- Information can be collated from formal checks such as the progress check at age two, observations from parents and observation and assessment by the setting of the child's progress.
- Staff will complete an 'initial concerns' form and pass it onto the SENDCO for further support and advice.

Planning intervention

- Everyone involved with the child should be given an opportunity to share their views. Parents should be encouraged to share their thoughts on the child's difficulties and be involved in the decision as to what will happen next.
- A first intervention option may be to carry on with applying differentiated support and to review the child's progress at an agreed date.
- If the child's needs are more complex, then the decision may be to go straight ahead and prepare a Play plan with detailed evidence-based interventions being applied straight away and simultaneously external referrals made.
- At Sticky Fingers we use the term play plan when discussing action plans for SEN children as we find this a more positive term to use.
- Play plans described below, ensure that children that are identified, or suspected of having a SEN will receive the right level of support and encouragement with their learning and development as early as possible.
- Play plan's should show what support is required to help achieve outcomes for the child and detail the frequency of these interventions and who will apply them and with what resources.
- Plan plans are reviewed half termly and are shared with the parents, the parents are asked to sign the front page and given a copy for their own records.
- A copy of the plan is stored in the child's file so that any other member of staff or an inspector looking at the file will see how the child is progressing and what interventions have been or are being applied.

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- If a child requires specific medical interventions during their time in the setting, a Health care plan should also be completed and integrated into the general plans to ensure the child's medical needs are known and safely met.
- The Play plan should provide an accessible summary of the child's needs, which can be used if further assessment is required including a statutory Education Health and Care (EHC) Assessment, and development of an EHC plan.
- If external agencies are already involved at this stage, then their professional views should also be included in the preparation of the Play plan and setting short-term targets.
- The Play plan highlights areas in which a child is progressing well and their interests; areas in which some additional support might be needed and any areas where there is a concern that a child may have a developmental delay (which may indicate a special educational need or disability). It describes the activities and strategies the provider intends to adopt to address any issues or concerns.
- Planned intervention should be based on the best possible evidence and have the required impact on progress with longer-term goals covering all aspects of learning and development and shorter-term targets meeting goals.
- The plan should focus on the needs of the child, the true characteristics, preferences, and aspirations of the child and involvement of the parents with a clear set of targets and expected outcomes for the child. Effective planning at this stage should help parents and children express their needs, wishes, and goals:
 - focus on the child as an individual and not their SEN label
 - be easy for children to understand and use clear ordinary language and images, rather than professional jargon
 - highlight the child strengths and capacities
 - enable the child, and those who know them best, to say what they have done, what they are interested in and what outcomes they are seeking in the future
 - tailor support to the needs of the individual
 - organise assessments to minimise demands on families
 - bring together relevant professionals to discuss and agree together the overall approach
- If the child fails to make progress and multi-agency support is sought, then it is at this point that Early Help/CAF assessment should be considered.

Record keeping

If a child has or is suspected of having a SEN, a dated record should be kept of:

- the initial cause for concern and the source of this information, (the progress check at age two and/or outcomes of previous interventions, parents/staff initial concerns forms.)
- the initial discussion with parents raising the possibility of the child's SEN

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- the views of the parents and other relevant persons including, wherever possible, the child's views;
- the procedures followed with regard to the Code of Practice to meet the child's SEND e.g. SEN action plan, referrals to external agencies and for statutory assessment
- evidence of the child's progress and any identified barriers to learning
- advice from other relevant professionals; and all subsequent meetings with parents and other persons and any subsequent referrals
- Records may include
 - observation and monitoring sheets
 - expressions of concern
 - risk assessments
 - access audits
 - health care plans (including guidelines for administering medication)
 - Play plans
 - meetings with parents and other agencies
 - additional information from and to outside agencies
 - agreements with parents
 - guidelines for the use of children's individual equipment; Early help CAF referrals
 - referral to the local authority identifying a child's special educational needs and request for statutory Education, Health, Care (EHC) needs assessment; and a copy of an EHC plan

Seeking additional funding/enhanced/top up

- If the child's needs cannot be met from within the setting's core funding, then it will be at this point that the evidence collected will be used to apply for top up/enhanced funding from the local authority's inclusion fund.
- If a new or existing child is disabled, then the setting should check if the family is in receipt or have applied for Disability Living Allowance. If so, the setting will be able to apply to their local authority for the local Disability Access Fund.
- The setting will do everything they can to support and not discriminate against a child with SEN, however the lead practitioner may make the decision to reduce or have limited sessions for the child or may explain that we do not have the staffing to support the child due to ratios.

Statutory assessment

- If a child has not made progress, then the next steps may be for the child to undergo an Education, Health and Care Assessment.

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- If a child is under compulsory school age, the local authority will conduct an EHC needs assessment if they consider that the child's needs cannot be met within the resources normally available to the early years setting.
- Children aged under age two are eligible where an assessment has indicated that the child is likely to have SEN which requires an EHC plan when they reach compulsory school age.
- When a child's needs appear to be sufficiently complex, or the evidence suggest specialist intervention then the local authority is likely to conclude that an EHC plan is necessary
- The local authority should fully involve the parent and must seek advice from the setting in making decisions about undertaking an EHC assessment and preparing an EHC plan.
- Settings should prepare by collating information about the child's SEND including:
 - documentation on the child's progress in the setting
 - interventions and support provided to date
 - evidence of external agency assessment, support and recommendations
 - parental views and wishes (and where appropriate those of the child)The information will then be submitted to the local authority to allow them to accurately assess the child in the context of the support already given.
- The local authority must inform the child's parents of their decision within six weeks of receiving a request for an assessment and give its reasons for their decision. If the local authority decides to conduct an assessment, it must ensure the child's parents are fully included right from the beginning and are invited to contribute their views. If the local authority subsequently decides not to conduct an assessment it must then inform the parents of their right to appeal that decision, of the requirement for them to consider mediation should they wish to appeal.
- If the local authority decides that a statutory EHC plan is not necessary, it must notify the parents and inform the provider, giving the reasons for the decision. This notification must take place within 16 weeks of the initial request or of the child having otherwise been brought to the local authority's attention.
- If the decision following an assessment is to compile an EHC plan the local authority should consult collaboratively with the parents in the preparation of the plan ensuring that their views and their child's preferences are taken into account and that plans describe positively what the child can do and has achieved to date.
- Plans are evidenced based and focus on short term outcomes and long-term aspirations for the child including family and community support. Parents have the right to request a particular provision for their child to be named within their EHC plan.
- If an early years setting is named, the local authority must fund this provision. They cannot force a setting to take a child and can only name the provision in the EHC if the setting agrees.
- Local authorities should consider reviewing an EHC plan for a child under age five at least every three to six months. Such reviews would complement the duty to carry out a review at least annually but may be streamlined and not necessarily require the attendance of the full range of professionals, depending on the needs of the child. The child's parents must be fully consulted

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on any proposed changes to the EHC plan and made aware of their right to appeal to the Tribunal.

External intervention and support

- Where external agency intervention has been identified to help support a child with SEND then this intervention should be recommended in writing by a suitably reliable source such as a speech and language therapist, paediatrician or educational psychologist.

Policies

- This policy works alongside our *06 safeguarding children, young people and vulnerable adults policy booklet* to protect children from child abuse. Staff will attend training to know the signs of abuse and induction training will support their knowledge of how to report this.
- Our *04 Health policy* explains procedures to support children with medical conditions or who require medication.
- Our *07 Record keeping and information sharing policy* explains the procedures we have in place to protect confidential information, this links with our *07.02 confidentiality policy*.
- Our *10.02 Complaints policy* explains the process parents/carers and other professionals can take if they are unhappy with work.
- Our *06.03 Whistle blowing* policy explains what staff members can do if they believe we are not keeping in line with requirements.