SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND DISABILITY (SEND) POLICY

Every child deserves the best possible start in life and the support that enables them to fulfil their potential. At Little Steps Day Care we are dedicated to ensuring each child is given the opportunity to access a high standard of care and education and the encouragement and support to guide them on their journey through early education.

"**All** children are entitled to an education that enables them to:

• achieve the best possible educational and other outcomes, and

• become confident young children with a growing ability to communicate their own views and ready to make the transition into compulsory education" (SEND Code of Practice (2015))

By following the Early Years Foundation Stage, we aim to provide teaching that supports the key characteristic of learning:

Playing and Exploring

Active Learning

Creating and Thinking Critically

This approach enables us to support the key skills children need to become independent learners and to tailor our teaching to each individual's needs and learning styles.

Children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) may require more tailored teaching to ensure they are able to fully access the learning opportunities at the setting. At Little Steps we strongly believe:

"If children can't learn the way we teach, we will teach the way they learn." (O. Ivar Lovaas)

We will make reasonable adjustments to the support we provide to ensure all children have the best possible opportunity to thrive.

Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCO)

The SENCO at Little Steps Day Care is Jo McClelland.

The SENCO works closely with all practitioners in the setting. They have responsibility for the day-to-day operation of the setting's SEN policy, and for coordinating provision across the setting. They are responsible for supporting colleagues in all aspects of their work with children with SEN.

The role of the SENCO involves:

- Ensuring all practitioners in the setting understand their responsibilities to children with SEN and the setting's approach to identifying and meeting SEN
- Advising and supporting colleagues

Reviewed: 04/06/2025

- Ensuring parents are closely involved throughout and that their insights inform action taken by the setting, and
- Liaising with professionals or agencies beyond the setting

(DfE and DH (2015) *SEN and disability code of practice: 0-25 years,* para 5.54)

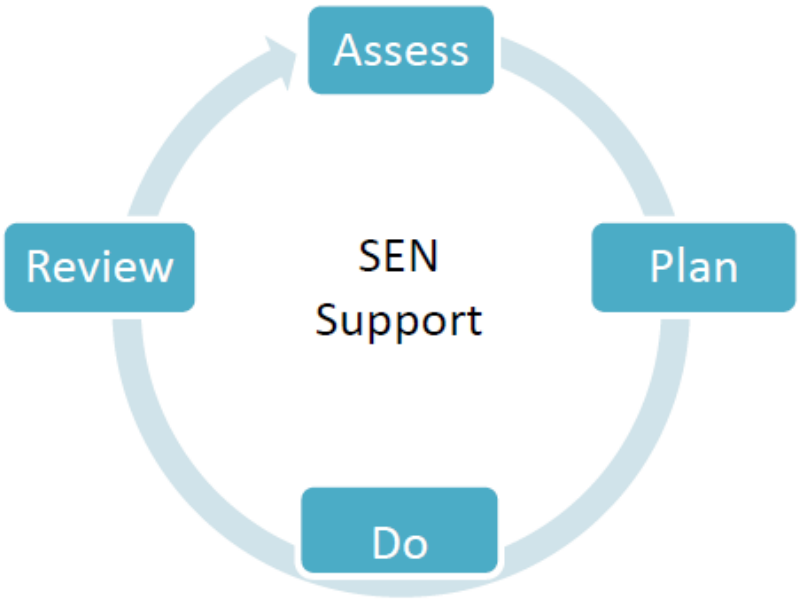
Key Carer System

At Little Steps Day Care we operate a 'Key Carer System' which means every child will have a key member of staff at the setting who is responsible for their care and education. They will be the main carer for that child to go to should they need comfort and support but also will be responsible for designing the activities and education for the individual child. Through observations, assessments and planning, they will get to know the child's needs in detail and be able to tailor learning opportunities to suit the child's learning style and needs.

Identification of SEND and Assessment

Formative assessments will be carried out throughout a child's time at the setting. These assessments will help the child's key carer and the setting's SENCO determine whether there are any areas for concern, where a child is not progressing at the expected rate. Where a child appears to be behind expected levels or where their progress gives cause for concern, the key carer and setting's SENCO will consider all the information about the child's learning and development. This information will be brought together and discussed with the child's parents/carers to gain an overall picture of the child and to decide together what support is in the best interest of the child. With parental consent, these concerns may then be discussed with other professionals, where necessary, and an Individual Education Plan (IEP) will be developed to ensure the setting is able to provide structured support for the child.

Through a graduate response, the setting will make regular observations of the child's learning and development and record any concerns they may have regarding their progress. The key carer will then plan the next steps needed to support the child and develop a range of fun activities for the child to help support the areas of need. These plans will then be delivered and the child's progress will be reviewed through further observations and assessed, starting the cycle again.



Working in Partnership with Outside Agencies

Through the key carer's assessments and discussions with parents, a need for more specialised support may be identified, for example from specialist teachers, educational psychologists or health services. This will be discussed with the parent and consent will be gained before sharing information with these agencies. We will then work in partnership, using their expertise and knowledge, along with that of the parents and key carer, to guide the child's IEP and put strategies in place to best support the child.

Education, Health and Care Plan (EHC Plan)

Parents/Carers or nursery staff may apply for an EHC needs assessment by the Local Authority if it is evident that a child's needs are more complex, will have a long term effect on their learning or if the child requires more than 20 hours one to one adult support. An Education Health and Care Needs Assessment form (EHCNAF) will be completed with parent/carers to build a picture of the child's needs. This will then be submitted to the Bedford Borough SEND Team.

Transitions

Throughout their journey through early education, children experience a range of transitions. This may be between rooms or between settings. For children with SEND, these transitions can be challenging and upsetting for them. Therefore, at Little Steps, we aim to make these milestones as smooth as possible.

For transitions between rooms within our setting, children begin a gradual settling in process at least one month before they turn 2. We follow the lead of ALL children and carefully observe their progress in settling into their new room, gradually increasing the amount of time spent in their new room. The current and future key carers will work closely to share information about each child and ensure they know them well and take the time to build a relationship with each child during their settling sessions.

For children with SEND, transitions to a new setting, or school can be quite daunting. The SENCO and key carer will contact the new setting, with permission from the parents, and invite them to begin sharing information. The new setting will be invited to visit Little Steps to spend time with the child, their key carer and the SENCO to discuss the child's individual needs and existing support plans. Parents will be invited to be a part of this process, to share their knowledge of the child, their views, and any possible concerns.

Admissions

Little Steps Day Care will make reasonable adjustments to provide care for all children and will work with parents/carers to determine every child's individual needs. We will do our upmost to ensure the service we provide is accessible to all; however, some constraints (e.g. adapting the layout of the building, obtaining specific training for staff or not being able to meet the ratio required to ensure child welfare) may prevent this. If a child starting at the setting has already been identified as needing additional support, the child's key carer and the setting's SENCO will discuss with the parents what adaptations and support will be needed and how we can ensure we fully meet the needs of the child.

If after joining Little Steps Day Care, we feel a child may require additional 1:1 support from an adult to meet their health and safety needs and that of the other children, we will endeavour to provide this where reasonably possible. However, if this is not possible, due to funding, recruitment or other reasons, and means that the health and safety of the specific child, or others in the setting, is at risk we will work with the parents and explore all available options, such as the potential need to reduce attendance hours, or whether the setting may not be able to meet the needs of the child and therefore support the parents with finding a more specialist setting.