

Special Educational Needs Policy

As the needs of all children are special in some way, we intend to recognize those needs which can be met within the normal framework of the classroom and those for which some additional resources can be provided either from within the school or from outside agencies, as required.

Little gems Montessori Nursery has a special needs policy, which has regard to the Code of Practice on the Identification and Assessment of Special Educational Needs. The policy complies with the statutory requirements laid out in the SEND Code of Practice 0-25 (July 2014), which is produced by the Department for Education and describes the way both schools and Education Authorities should identify and support all children with SEND, and with reference to the following guidance and documents:

- The Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS).
- The Special Educational Needs and Disability Regulations 2014.
- The Cyprus's Ministry of Education and Culture mechanisms for Early Detection of Children with Special Needs [185(1)2001].

This requires that the school identify children's needs on a five-point scale.

In general terms the stages are:

Stage 1: A Special Educational Need (SEN) is identified and can then be provided for in class.

Stage 2: The need is such that additional advice and support is provided for within the nursery school.

Stage 3: Support is required from outside agencies.

Stage 4: More detailed advice and assessment is carried out which may result in a proposal to start a statutory assessment of SEN or specific guidelines about how home and nursery school may give support.

Stage 5: The need for a statement of SEN is considered, and, if appropriate, this is made.

Elena Savva and Diamantis Thomas are the Special Educational Needs Coordinators (SENCO) and work closely with the Principal, Carola Lång-Howard and Manager, Emma Howard, who are the coordinators of English as a Second or Additional Language (ESL/EAL). In conjunction with Carola and Emma, Helen and Diamantis are responsible for all matters relating to the Code of Practice, staff training, identifying the special educational needs of children, and parent liaison.

The nursery school values the contribution, which parents can make to their children's education. It is important that there is a regular dialogue between the school and parents, and this becomes essential when a child is experiencing difficulties educationally, socially or behaviourally. We wish to work in partnership with parents in the child's interests. Please have no hesitation in contacting the Principal and/or the SENCO coordinator with any concerns, no matter how small.

We aim to follow the fundamental principles of the SEN Code of Practice and these are:

- A child with SEN should have their needs met.
- The SEN will normally be met in mainstream schools or early education settings.
- The view of the child, if possible, should be sought and then taken into account.
- Parents have a vital role in supporting the child's education.
- Children with SEN should be offered full access to a broad-balanced and relevant education, including an appropriate curriculum for the foundation stage.

Special educational provision means:

- (a) For children of two or over, education provision which is additional to, or otherwise different from, the educational provision made generally for children of their age in schools maintained by educational authorities, other than special schools, in the area.
- (b) For children under two, educational provision of any kind.

English as a Second or Additional Language

As Cyprus is a multi-cultural society, children that come to **Little Gems Montessori Nursery** may have widely varied backgrounds, and we pride ourselves on the unity and harmony, which we foster among the children. We value each child's contribution to the school community, and responds by providing a nurturing and supporting environment in which they can flourish.

Where children have English as a second or additional language, the class teacher will work closely with the ESL/EAL coordinator, the SENCO, and parents/guardians to support their particular needs.

Access for the disabled

The nursery is equipped with entrances on ground level (Nicosia), ramp (Larnaca) and wide doorways to enable children with disabilities access to the school. The needs of the pupils will be taken into account when considering full access to the foundation stage curriculum.

The Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCO)

The SENCO will have responsibility for:

- Liaison with parents and other professionals in respect of children with special educational needs.
- Taking the lead in further assessments and planning support.
- Advising and supporting other practitioners in the setting.
- Ensuring that appropriate Individual Education Plans are in place and that these are reviewed regularly.
- Ensuring that relevant background information about individual children with SEN is collected, recorded and updated.

If any member of staff has any concerns regarding a child they should share their concerns with the Principal, other staff and practically with the SENCO. At this stage staff should observe the child regularly to gather evidence for possible future discussions with parents or outside agencies.

If staff feels that there is still cause for concern after their initial observations, parents will be invited to discuss these concerns with a member(s) of staff. According to Cyprus law (http://www.moec.gov.cy/eidiki_ekpaidefsi/axiologisi_paidion.html) and SENCO the school has the right to inform the Ministry of Education as soon as they identify that a child may have special needs. Parents will also be invited to contribute their knowledge and understanding of their child, and raise any concerns they may have, and to contribute to targets if an Individual Education Plan is produced and their permission will be sought if staff needs to contact outside agencies.

Early Years Action

When a child in the setting is identified as having a special educational need we initially devise our own interventions to be used in addition to our usual curriculum: (Early Years Action). The triggers for Early Years Action could be that the child:

- Makes little or no progress even when teaching approaches are particularly targeted to improve the child's identified area of weakness.
- Continues working at levels significantly lower than those expected for children of a similar age in certain areas.
- Presents persistent emotional and/or behavioural difficulties, which are not ameliorated by the behaviour management techniques usually employed in the setting.
- Has sensory or physical problems, and continues to make little or no progress despite the provision of personal aids and equipment.
- Has communication and/or interaction difficulties, and requires specific individual interventions in order to access.

Individual Education Plan

An Individual Education Plan (IEP) contains planning for the child, which is additional to, or different from, the standard provision and includes:

- Short-term strategies set for the child.
- Teaching strategies.

- The provision to be put in place.
- When/how the plan is to be reviewed.
- The outcome of the action taken.

The IEP will be reviewed half termly with parents and, if appropriate, the child and outside agencies. Where it is deemed not applicable for the child to attend their views and needs should be taken into consideration.

Early Years Action Plus

Early Years Action Plus may be put into place if, despite internal support under the Early Years Action Strategies, the child requires the involvement of external support services that can provide more specialist assessments, give advice on the use of new or specialist strategies or materials, and in some cases provide support for particular activities. Some children will move straight to Early Years Action Plus if there is outside involvement with outside agencies when they arrive at the setting.

Requests for Statutory Assessments

For a very few children the help given by the early education setting through Early Years Action Plus will not be sufficiently effective to enable the child to progress satisfactorily. It will then be necessary for the setting, in consultation with the parents and any external agencies already involved, to consider whether a statutory multi-disciplinary assessment may be appropriate. Where a request for a statutory assessment is made to the educational authorities, the pupil will have demonstrated significant cause for concern and the setting will have evidence gathered throughout the stages listed above.

Annual Review

As a result of a statutory assessment the parties involved will decide whether a child needs provision through a Statement of Special Educational Need. The Statement will outline the provision necessary, the name of the setting where the provision is to be made and how the needs will be met; this may be through additional support or equipment and may have a cost implication. All early years statements are reviewed at six monthly intervals and all those involved are invited to consider whether any amendments need or can be made.

Record Keeping

All children have individual records: these are based predominantly on observations. We use regular observations, consultations with peers, staff and other professionals to inform planning in order to meet the needs of individuals. Information gathered may be shared with other professionals with parental permission. The records we keep are available to the child's parents on request. In addition, when a child is aged between two and three, early years practitioners must review progress and provide parents with a short written summary of their child's development, focusing in particular on communication and language; physical development and personal; social and emotional development.

Confidentiality

We will respect parent's rights to confidentiality when supporting children with SEN; we will always discuss any possible referrals to other services with parents to seek their agreement before we make such referrals.

Parents will be involved in setting all targets for their child. IEP's will be reviewed regularly and parents will be invited to contribute to this review.

All of Little Gems' staff will need to be aware of the IEP targets agreed for a child as they are all likely to be involved with in supporting that child. However, all of the staff are also aware that their knowledge of these targets is privileged information, which should not be shared with anyone without permission of either the settings SENCO or Principal who would discuss any need to share information with the child's parent or carer.

Nursery Transfer Summary

If a child moves to another nursery or reception setting we complete a Nursery Transfer Summary that outlines the child's achievements at our setting. This has a section which relates to Special Educational Needs and asks for parents' and child(ren)'s comments.