

Early Years Offer

Stepping Stone Pre-School
Ofsted number EY452006

1. How does the setting know if children need extra help and what should I do if I think my child may have special educational needs?

At Stepping Stone Pre-School every child is allocated a key person who will settle in your child and will regularly assess your child in their development through the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) framework. Every term your child's progress is tracked in the seven areas of learning for each typical behaviour age band. If any area of learning is below or above your child's typical behaviour age band we will discuss your child's progress with you and strategies and help we will put in place.

You can speak to your key person if you have any concerns about your child. However Terri Mercer is our designated coordinator for special educational needs and disabilities (SENCo) and Lisa Geary is our SENCo support

Before starting at Stepping Stones your key person will do a home visit and an 'all about me' form will be filled in and also a starting point assessment will be carried out. If your child has an identified special need before joining our setting, Terri will work with you to ensure that everything is in place e.g. special equipment, staff training, classroom organisation etc. before your child joins us.

Your child's key person will work with Terri and will continually monitor your child's progress and review your child's development through the EYFS

We work very closely with other professionals such as health visitors, speech and language therapists, educational psychologists and other healthcare professionals to ensure that your child is given appropriate support and that we provide the very best care and educational opportunities for your child.

We work closely with the local Children Centre who can offer advice for your child. If we identify your child with a specific development need we will refer your child to Integrated Services for Learning who will provide your child with the professionals required in your child's development.

2. How will the setting staff support my child?

All children in our setting have a learning journey which has your child's 'all about me', your child's starting point, observations, assessments and typical behaviour tracker. Your child's key person will develop a strong attachment with your child, which will start with a home visit; and we will work with you to ensure your child is happy and settled at Stepping Stone Pre-school

Our curriculum is based on a theme each half term and adult led craft activities are planned around that theme. We also have adult led planning which is based around the individual child and observations are planned using the 'what next' from your child's unique child report.

Our main room is set out to reflect our children's interests and cover all seven areas of learning e.g. Home corner, literacy, mathematics, art and craft, mark making, small world and construction. Our corridor area encourages messy play e.g. painting, play dough, sand, water. We have an outside play area, which is in a park area. We make use of this area by going on nature walks and exploring the environment.

We have two members of staff, Terri Mercer and Lisa Geary, who are specialist SENCo, having a wide range of experience helping children with different needs.

If your child has a specific learning need then your child will be assessed using the Individual Assessment of Early Learning and Development (IEALD) to see which areas of development your child needs help with. Your key person and Terri (SENCo) will then put a SEN support plan in place to help your child to develop in their specific area of learning. Terri will work to ensure that you are closely involved at all stages of your child's SEN support plan and targets and strategies are used to help your child at school and at home. We will also liaise with a wide range of professionals and use their strategies and targets to support your child.

We will work closely with other professionals for any child on an Education, Health and Care plan and these children may receive educational needs funding to support their specific need.

3. How will I know how my child is doing?

At Stepping Stones we are happy to give regular feedback on your child's progress via daily verbal reports. We are always happy to discuss your child's progress informally at the setting or by telephone or e-mail.

At the end of every term we will review your child's progress via observations and assessments and will track your child's progress on their typical behaviour tracking sheet, which is in their learning journals. Each half term you will receive your child's unique child report showing your child's progress. If your child starts with us at the age of two we will also give you your child's two year old check.

We have termly parent consultations where your key person will show you your child's learning journey and discuss your child's development and any concerns they may have.

For children with a specific developmental need we will have review meetings every 6 weeks to discuss progress of targets on their SEN support plan and to either continue with plan or set new targets. We will also review IEALD's every six weeks. Any reports or visits from other professionals are shared with the parents.

At Stepping Stone Pre-School we have parent week every term, where you can stay and play with your child, see how your child is getting on and what activities they enjoy and friendships they have made.

We are happy to have regular formal meeting with you to discuss your child's progress, depending on your child's level of need, and these can be arranged with your key person.

There are many formal ways of communicating about your child's progress but nothing is better than an informal chat at the end of a session, so please always speak to any of our staff about any concerns.

4. How will the learning and development provision be matched to my child's needs?

All staff at Stepping Stone are dedicated to providing children in our care with a caring, stimulating and child initiated learning environment. Children in our setting are encouraged to explore independently and to make choices.

Through the EYFS we will observe and assess your child. We will track your child's progress and then plan their learning and development around our observations by including it in our adult led activities and observations.

We have visual timetables for those children with speech and language difficulties. We are flexible with the routine of the setting but have specific time based events which take place within a session such as self-registration at the start of the session, rolling snack time half way through session and carpet time at the end of a session. These are reflected in our visual timetables.

We work closely with other professionals and will follow their advice on how to support your child's particular needs. The SENCo will ensure that training is accessed for staff, where possible, to support your child's learning. SEN support plans are, where possible, used in our curriculum planning. We have regular meetings every six weeks with parents to discuss their child's plan and to set new targets. We will support your child's learning by providing resources and differentiating any activity to your child's needs so that all children can take part in that activity.

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

At Stepping Stone Pre-school we ensure that we have a welcoming and positive environment for all children. All staff pride themselves in being positive role models and have a positive approach to all children's learning. We have an environment which is safe and secure and have a variety of equipment and resources for all age groups in our setting from 2-4 year olds. We provide snack in our setting and cater for all allergies and dietary needs. A sheet with the children's dietary needs and allergies are on display for all staff to see.

We will involve other professionals (e.g. health visitors, speech therapists) to ensure that we support your child in all areas of their development. We will support you and your child with toilet training, and any issues regarding eating, sleeping etc. Stepping Stone Pre-school is fully equipped with changing mats and child toilet seats.

Stepping Stones has policies to help support your child's wellbeing which all staff are aware and use in their everyday practise.

If your child has any specific medical needs our staff will undergo any training for example epi pen training and we will administer any medication prescribed by a hospital paediatrician or GP.

We have a behaviour management policy which outlines the procedures used at Stepping Stone Pre-school, however, if specialist help is required to manage behaviour we will request the support of the inclusion development officer (IDO) employed by the local authority.

All Stepping Stone Staff have a positive approach to all children's individual learning and development and are sensitive to their needs. We have a strong emphasis on providing a caring environment, and this is supported through various strategies such as one to one support. Any unwanted behaviour and the testing of boundaries is often part of growing up, and we will work closely with you to put strategies in place to support and enhance your child's positive behaviours.

Any child who has educational needs funding will have a designated person who will work one to one with the child to support their learning.

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

At Stepping Stone Pre-School we have a very good link with our local children's centre and we work with a wide range of agencies such as educational psychologists, speech and language therapists, health visitors etc. We work closely with the family support workers at the children centre attending Common Assessment Framework (CAF) meetings etc. when required. Staff whose key children have a Team Around the Family (TAF) work closely with the other professionals to support the family and will attend the TAF meetings along with the SENCo.

Our staff are often on training to support their role as early year's practitioners and go on any training courses to support children with a specific SEN need.

We also have a good relationship with the local feeder school, and this will make the process of moving to a new setting much easier for your child. Staff will go with the children to the local school on the visit day with all reception children. We also arrange transition visits from other schools our children are going to and will arrange for the teachers to visit the children in our setting. Any information about any child with a specific need is passed on to the feeder school and any support is given to the school to make your child's transition a happy one.

7. What training and/or experience do the staff, supporting children with SEND, have?

The majority of our staff have a lot of experience with working with children with special needs. Majority of our staff have level 3 qualification, one member of staff is training for her level 3 and one member of staff has her foundation degree.

One member of our staff has been trained in British sign language and has used her knowledge to support individual children.

All staff are trained on the Wellcom speech and language programme and we use this resource to support children with speech and language difficulties. Our SENCo Lisa Geary has four years' experience supporting children with a wide range of educational needs.

We have weekly staff meetings where safeguarding and SEND children are discussed so all staff aware of any issues and strategies in place for those children.

Lisa attends regular SENCo Cluster meetings.

The majority of our staff have experience working with outside agencies and professionals to help your child's development.

8. How will my child be included in activities outside the setting?

At Stepping Stones we have regular trips to the park where we go on nature walks or walk over to the playground equipment. We involve all our children and provide support i.e. buggies if needed.

Every Summer we have a sponsored treasure hunt around the park where parents are involved taking their children.

Your child will benefit from all activities outside the setting and full risk assessments will be carried out. Any medication or specialist equipment will go with the child.

We will discuss your child's needs with you to ensure they can be included. You will not be required to accompany your child on park visits. However, if you are unhappy about your child going to the park, you would be welcome to come too.

9. How will I be involved in discussions about and planning for my child's learning and development?

Your child's key person will discuss your child's needs during an arranged home visit. We have termly parent's evenings where you are able to see your child's learning journey and discuss any concerns.

For our older children, 3-4 year old, they take home Weatherby bear for the evening or weekend. He has a diary and you are able to write an entry which will be read out on Weatherby's return to school.

Our Nursery children take home on a weekly basis a firm foundation game, letter of the week sheet, a library book for parents to read to them and a first reading book to encourage early reading skills.

We welcome any parental feedback and encourage parents to tell us what their child has been doing at home.

Your child's key person and SENCo will also attend Team around the Family meetings which are carried out regularly.

If outside professionals come in to see your child we will try to organise a meeting at the end of that visit for a brief discussion. If this is not possible then any reports will be copied and given to you.

Stepping Stone Pre-School will always obtain parental consent before we refer your child to any outside agencies.

10. How accessible is the building / environment?

Stepping Stone Pre-school's environment is very accessible and meets the current disability regulations.

We don't have any stairs in our building.

All toys, equipment and activities are at a child's level and are age appropriate.

Our garden is all on one level. Our main playground is a fenced off area of a car park which is tarmac but we do have access to the surrounding park area of grass, trees, pond and playground equipment.

We have a disabled toilet with wheelchair access.

11. How will the setting prepare and support my child with transitions between home, settings and school?

Before starting at Stepping Stone Pre-school a toddler starter session will be organised at Stepping Stone Pre-School for you and your child to attend prior to their start date. You will meet your child's key person and a home visit will be arranged. Starter packs along with a Stepping Stones bag will be given to the parent.

We will carry out the pre-arranged home visit so your key person and another member of staff can meet your child in their home environment. The key person will fill in 'All about me' form and starting point questionnaire.

If your child receives care from any other setting (e.g. another pre-school/nursery or a child minder) we will work with them by sharing learning journeys on a termly basis.

On your child's first day their key person will be there to settle your child. If your child has problems with settling in your key worker will work with you to ensure your child settles happily.

When it is time for your child to leave Stepping Stone Pre-school for another nursery or reception we will contact the new setting and invite them to visit your child at Stepping Stone Pre-School. During this visit the teacher from the school will meet and play with your child and discuss their development and progress. For children with SEN the SENCo will visit the school to discuss the child's needs and arrange further visits.

12. How will [the setting's] resources be used to support children's special educational needs?

We will discuss with parents before their child's starts if there is any specialist equipment or toys needed to support their child. All equipment and toys are moveable and can be made accessible. They are also age and stage appropriate. We will either seek to borrow or purchase any specific equipment needed for a specific need.

Stepping Stone Pre-school has a high staff/child ratio, so your child will receive plenty of adult support. We also have a range of resources and strategies in place to support children with a range of needs e.g. we have visual timetables (using photographs and symbols) these are used with speech and language delay or if English is a second language.

We have weekly staff meetings to discuss any child's short and long term needs. Each child has a key person and our SENCo will support any child's needs.

We take advice from our IDO to ensure our setting provides for all children's needs.

13. Who can I contact for further information about the early years offer in the setting?

Terri Mercer, SENCo,
Telephone: 01438 813070 or E-Mail steppingstoneprechool@hotmail.com

For further information on the local authority's Local Offer of service and provision for children with special educational needs and disability go to www.hertsdirect.org/localoffer