

Special Educational Needs Policy

Introductory Statement

In Crèche Cois Laoi we believe that every child should have the best possible learning opportunities in life and we therefore promote inclusive development. We recognise that some children may need more attention than others due to particular accessed needs, known disabilities or disorders. We are committed to taking specific action where possible, to include, support and encourage these children in the Crèche.

Application of the policy

This policy has been prepared to ensure equality of access by defining the approach of the Crèche to a child with special needs and to assist parents in making an informed decision in relation to the enrolment of a child with special needs in the Crèche. This policy covers all children in the crèche from age 0-12 years attending any of the full-time, after school or seasonal crèche programmes. To ensure we continue to comply with our legal obligations and apply best practice to the service we offer, the Crèche will review this policy on a regular basis. *Please note: This policy should be read in conjunction with the policy on Enrolment.*

Definition of special educational needs

For the purpose of this policy, a child is understood to have “special educational needs”, if s/he has:

- A learning or care requirement that is significantly different from the majority of children of the same age; and/or
- A known disability or disorder which prevents or hinders him/her from making full use of all crèche facilities of a kind generally used by children of his/her age.

If a child shows any of these signs, the procedures identified in this policy will be invoked to ensure that the crèche has the necessary resources to care for the child adequately. *Please note: as the safety and welfare of every child within the Crèche is paramount, Crèche management reserves the right to ask parents at any time to vacate their place immediately if their child is deemed to pose a danger to him/herself or to other children in the Crèche.*

Responsibilities

To guarantee the full integration of a child with special educational needs or disability into the crèche, the following responsibilities apply.

- ***Responsibilities of the Crèche Management***
 - Ensure the health, safety and welfare of all children and employees in the Crèche.
 - Regularly monitor, review and update this policy in line with legislation and best practice.
 - Accommodate staff to attend whenever possible, in-service training on accommodating children with special educational needs and disabilities.

- Establish a fair and objective assessment process and to communicate in a timely manner the decision to the parents as to whether the Crèche can accommodate the needs of their child.
- Ascertain if the Crèche environment and available resources can meet a child with a Special Educational Needs.
- Ensure in as much as possible, individual special educational needs are identified and communicated to all involved in the care of the child thus ensuring the application of agreed procedures, the continuity of provision of sufficient care and the maintenance of individual records of needs.
- Appoint a named co-ordinator from each group for special educational needs, known as the Educational Needs Co-ordinator (ENCO) to:
 - In conjunction with the Crèche manager meet with parents who have identified their child as having special educational needs or a disability and to support and guide them through the assessment process;
 - Liaise between the parents, crèche management, outside support services and professionals to assess how the needs of the child could be accommodated in the Crèche;
 - Make a recommendation to Crèche management on the resources required to ensure the needs of the child would be met;
 - In the event of a place being offered to a child with special educational needs or a disability, to communicate any additional needs of the child to the child's key worker;
 - Advise and support other Crèche staff;
 - Develop an Individual Educational Plan (IEP) for the child in conjunction with the child's parents and key worker;
 - Incorporate short term targets in the IEP and ensure review on a regular basis;
 - Ensure all relevant information is collected, recorded and updated on a regular basis;
 - Develop a relationship with the parents of the child and communicate with them on a ongoing basis;
 - Regularly assess if the needs of the child are being met by the Crèche;
 - Ensure each child with special educational needs makes progress and achieves as much as they can in the Crèche.
 - Act as an additional source of support to the child with special educational needs or disability in the Crèche.

- ***Responsibilities of the crèche staff***

- To comply with this policy and follow all procedures;
- To work with the ENCO on meeting the needs of the child;
- To facilitate the integration of a child with special educational needs / disabilities in the Crèche;
- To implement an IEP when appropriate;
- To attend all in-service training on accommodating children with special educational needs/ disabilities.

- ***Responsibilities of the parents***

- To inform the Crèche before enrolment if their child has special needs;
- To inform crèche staff if they become aware of additional or emerging needs while their child attends the Crèche;
- To comply with the procedures as outlined in this policy;
- To work with the ENCO to assess the needs of the child and;
- To provide the Crèche with all information pertaining to their child's sensory, physical, emotional, learning, self-help and/or communication needs including medical reports if requested by the Crèche.

Identification of Special Educational Needs/ Disability prior to Enrolment

Disclosure relating to a child with Special Educational Needs/ Disability (prior to enrolment)

Parents will be asked to complete pre-admission enrolment forms, when registering a child with the Crèche. Particular attention is given to identifying any special educational needs your child may have.

Assessment of Special Educational Needs prior to enrolment

After enrolment the Crèche manager and the Crèche ENCO will meet with parents and their child to gather further information to assess any additional needs. It is important that parents notify the Crèche if their child is attending other services. It is extremely useful if parents make all relevant reports and programmes from external services available to Crèche. Parents may be asked for permission to allow Crèche Manager or ENCO to discuss or link in with other services that their child is involved with.

Before making a final decision on whether the Crèche can cater for a child with special educational needs, Crèche management must ensure that the quality of care to all children enrolled will not be significantly compromised by the acceptance of any child with special educational needs.

After receiving all the necessary information, discussing it with parents, staff, relevant services, reviewing the resources required and the impact on the running of the room, the Crèche manager will decide if the Crèche environment can accommodate the needs of the child.

Should staff feel that the admission of any child with special educational needs would significantly affect the running of the room, the Crèche Manager may insist upon a trial period.

If the Crèche environment is suitable for the child's needs, the Crèche manager and the ENCO will discuss with the parents the most appropriate setting for the child and devise an appropriate IEP in conjunction with the parents.

If the Crèche Manager feels that the Crèche environment is not appropriate in meeting the child's needs, she/he will meet with the child's parents and inform them of the basis for this opinion. Parents have a right to appeal the decision to the Crèche Board of Management.

Identification of Special Educational Needs/ Disability – Post Enrolment

A child's early years are an important time for their development. If they have special educational needs it is important they are discovered as early as possible.

Disclosure of a child with Special Educational Needs/ Disability (Post Enrolment)

If you become aware of any additional or emerging need your child may have while attending the Crèche it is important that you communicate this to the Crèche Manager. The Crèche Manager will make every effort to support parents to ensure that the Crèche can support their child in every way possible. If your child is being assisted by other services and agencies, we will try and integrate with these support services to ensure optimal and consistent care.

Assessment of Special Educational Needs/Disability Post Enrolment

Crèche staff are trained in the different stages of Child Development. Staff conduct regular observations and three developmental checklists during the year for all children. Sometimes a child will not appear to be making progress generally or may have a weakness in a particular area of their development. This may indicate the need for additional help or support in addition to what is normally available to children in the Crèche. Crèche staff will raise concerns they have with the ENCO and the Crèche Manager. Crèche staff may adapt the child care programme to improve the child's area of weakness. An (IEP) may be drawn up following consultation with the Crèche ENCO and the child's parents and will be regularly reviewed.

Crèche management may conclude that a child needs additional support from outside agencies under the following conditions, if a child:

- Makes little or no progress even when the programme of care has been targeted to improve the child's identified area of weakness;
- Continues working at levels significantly below 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 used by the Crèche;
- Has sensory or physical problems;
- Has communication and or interaction difficulties

Crèche management will meet with the child's parents outlining the concerns. If Crèche management in consultation with parents conclude that a child may need further support to help them progress, support agencies will be contacted with parental agreement.

Involving Support Agencies

Where a concern has been identified, the first point of contact for the parent may be a Public Health Nurse who acts as a referral agent. The Public Health Nurse may request further diagnostic assessment to be carried by specialists in early intervention. This often involves people from different professional backgrounds working together as part of a team, for example an Occupational Therapist, Physiotherapist, Speech and Language Therapist, Educational Psychologist and Specialist Teacher.

Some support agencies may act in an advisory capacity or provide specialist assessment or be involved in assisting in teaching the child directly. A list of support agencies is available at the Crèche.

Following assessment, Crèche staff will work with the outside agency or support service and assist in putting in place a revised IEP, setting out new strategies for supporting the child's progress.

Crèche Cois Laoi acknowledges that in some instances, despite all efforts by Crèche staff, the Crèche setting may no longer support the child's needs. In this instance, Crèche management in consultation with the crèche staff and the child's parents may deem Crèche Cois Laoi unsuitable for a child's needs. Parents can appeal to the Crèche Board of Management if their opinion differs to that of the Crèche management.

Integration of Child in Class Room Setting

The ENCO will support and work closely with parents and Crèche staff to ensure that the child is happy and settled in their environment.

Staff in the room will be given an understanding of the development stage of any child with special educational needs. The IEP will be worked on with two or three learning targets per term in conjunction with the parents. Regular feedback will be given to parents.

In so far as possible, staff will adapt the setting to ensure maximum access to the curriculum and to promote independence.

The goal for each child will be to partake in all of the group's activities at their own pace unless their condition restricts access. It is also a goal that a child with special educational needs will generally follow the same behaviour code as other children.

Staff will encourage interactions and socialisation with peers.

Professional Development

Crèche Cois Laoi has a number of staff who have attended Special Needs Courses organised by various childcare organisations. Crèche Cois Laoi is committed to ensure that a staff member will be formally trained in as in Special Needs Education.

Implementation Date

January 2011

Ratification and Communication

Crèche Cois Laoi reviews all policies over a two year cycle. Parents are given draft copies of policies and invited to suggest changes. When a policy has been reviewed by the Crèche Board of Management, copies are circulated to all parents and are on the Crèche Cois Laoi website.