

Supporting Children with SEND in Solihull Coleshill Heath Chuckles and Chums : Hattie

Good practice example:

Providing access and inclusion in the early years

Contact: Hannah Bonner : Manager Chuckles Day Nursery

The setting: Chuckles and Chums have been established since 1991, providing childcare for children aged 0-12 years. The setting is registered by Ofsted and can care for 80 children within Chuckles (0-4 years) and 50 children in Chums Out of School Club (4-12 years). It is owned by the Governors of Coleshill Heath School, with the headteacher of the school taking responsibility for the nursery.

The setting is open 50 weeks of the year.

There is a highly experienced and qualified team of 24 staff who in addition have worked at the setting for many years.

The nursery offers the 30 hours free entitlement to eligible parents. This case study considers how the setting have worked successfully with Hattie who is 3 years old and who has emerging needs which have required them to work closely with her parent and other professionals to further understand Hattie, and how to support her development.

The child: When Hattie started nursery, her key person noticed she was quite a shy and quiet little girl who liked to have the presence of a familiar adult during her sessions. She also has a cheeky side to her personality too which can be seen when she is at ease in a familiar environment and with a familiar adult close by. This is when Hattie will initiate interactions such as hide and seek.

What is important to Hattie?

Hattie likes to have familiar adults close by. She really enjoys adult interaction and is responsive in situations where her key person is giving her full attention and responds to her successes. Hattie enjoys arts and crafts, listening to stories and playing outside on the large equipment. Hattie likes to have time to play alone or in small groups.

What is important for Hattie?

That Hattie receives close and regular adult support and guidance to develop her play skills to play alongside other children that speech communication and language activities are carried out in the setting to support her language development. That Hattie develops her social skills so that she can initiate interaction and be part of the activities alongside her peers. It is also important for Hattie that, as she is at the nursery for an extended period of time, she has wide and varied opportunities to extend her learning and practice and generalise her skills in different situations. Hattie sometimes needs support for her to be safe in the nursery environment as she sometimes falls.

Planning and preparation

Chuckles offer a flexible settling in period for children to become used to the nursery staff, environment, routines, expectations and opportunities and experiences. During the settling in process, the key person starts to develop a relationship with the child's parent. Hattie's key person developed a good relationship with her parent and was able to take the lead role in discussing Hattie's development and progress.

The SENCo at Chuckles is very experienced and is available to support the key person if it is needed. The setting also called upon specialist inclusion support service to offer advice and support to supplement the settings' knowledge and understanding of how to use effective observations and assessments to contribute to an Intervention Plan for Hattie.

Whole setting Universal practice

Chuckles nursery has a regular cycle of observations and assessment to track all children's progress. This is monitored by the deputy and manager of the setting so that any gaps or concerns are picked up as early as possible.

Hattie's key person's observations and assessments were used to start to look at areas of development that Hattie was making slow progress or where her development was causing concern. Hattie's key person shared her concerns with the setting SENCo who maintains an overview of any children who may have been identified through their assessments as needing some extra in put in specific aspects of the EYFS.

Initially, Hattie's assessments showed that she was below expected levels in all areas of the EYFS. However, through discussion and further consideration, it was felt that the key areas to focus on were social and emotional development, specifically relating to making relationships and self-confidence and self-awareness. Communication and language relating to speaking and listening and attention was also a key focus.

Hattie's parent was involved from the start and the observations and assessments were shared. Her parent also shared that she had been concerned about Hattie's speech and lack of social interaction with other children. She felt that Hattie may require additional support and was happy to work with the nursery to address this. The nursery worked with the parent by providing ideas and strategies to support Hattie's development and confidence.

Adjustments to whole setting practice

Adjustments were made to the setting's approach to group work, carpet time and focused activities. These adaptations include ensuring an adult sat close to Hattie during carpet sessions so that she can interact and retain focus, smaller group work with the opportunity to support interactions between a small number of her peers and using adult-child interaction strategies similar to those promoted by I Can. The setting continued to implement ideas to support Hattie and gathered information about her progress and needs so that they could apply for additional funding from Solihull's Inclusion Fund. This aided the setting to buy some additional resources such as books and story sacks as well as "finger gym" resources.

Targeted support

The setting has received support from a specialist teacher to use strategies to support Hattie. This support was delivered as short focused intervention for Hattie with her key person. It was identified that Hattie was more confident and more relaxed in this situation and she was giving more verbal responses.

Hattie was also encouraged to use her newly developing communication and interaction skills in other situations in the setting.

The setting has noticed that "Hattie's confidence and her emotional resilience increased and she was more able to interact with her peers. Her speech had improved although she still requires support with this. Although Hattie is still assessed as being below her expected levels of development across the EYFS, her increased ability to work alongside others and concentrate on a task with pleasure at completing it. Hattie is genuinely excited to start school now and this is a big step forward from the shy little girl that started with us".

Hattie's parent also felt that she had made positive progress and was happy that what the setting had in place was supporting her development.

Keys to success

- Flexibility of provision to offer Hattie a wide range of experiences and opportunities across the 30 hours for focused intervention and opportunities to generalise her development and skills.
- Effective progress tracking and monitoring in place as part of universal practice.
- Parent was involved throughout and given daily updates.
- Good understanding of the assess, plan, do and review cycle.
- Partnership working with other professionals.
- Experienced staff team and trained SENCo.

Useful websites with information, resources and strategies to support children with speech, language and communication difficulties :

- The Communication Trust – Early years: <https://www.thecommunicationtrust.org.uk/earlyyears/>
- Elklan Speech & Language training : <http://www.elklan.co.uk/>
- Every Child a Talker (ECAT) :<http://www.foundationyears.org.uk/2011/10/every-child-a-talker-guidance-for-early-language-lead-practitioners/>
- ICAN :<http://www.ican.org.uk/> Fact sheets :<http://www.ican.org.uk/What-we-do/1%20CAN%20Help/factsheets>
- Inclusion Development Programme :<http://www.sendgateway.org.uk/resources.early-years-supporting-children-with-speech-language-and-communication-needs-slc.html>
- Talking Point :<http://www.talkingpoint.org.uk/directory/practitioner-faqs>
- <https://www.foundationyears.org.uk/files/2015/06/Section-5-SEN-Support-A-Graduated-approach.pdf>

This case study was made possible through the Solihull 30 hours "Delivery Support Fund" grant "Supporting children with SEND". Funding was made available for work that directly benefits 30 hours delivery and practice. Solihull worked with Julie Revels (Independent Consultant on behalf of Action for Children) during Summer 2018 to deliver training and complete two child case studies.

<http://socialsolihull.org.uk/localoffer/family-information-service-directory/3271/chuckles-day-nursery/>
<http://socialsolihull.org.uk/localoffer/education/children-and-young-peoples-send-service/educational-psychology-service/early-years-send-team-2/> - Early Years Support and Assessment Team (EYSAT)