

Returning to nursery for children with SEND (Covid-19)

As some of you start to open up your settings again, and some of you that have remained open start to welcome more children back to nursery, we know that this will be an anxious time for staff and parents.

We can't imagine the challenges you will all face to meet the government guidelines required for this to happen.

Where you might have children with SEND returning to your nurseries we wanted to remind you that all of The Early Intervention team remain working remotely and are available to discuss any concerns with you and I know many of you have continued to have contact with us during recent weeks. We are happy to speak to you on the phone or to have virtual meetings with nursery staff and/or support your contact with parents of children with SEND. Some of us have had direct contact with families who we have already had referrals for.

We wanted to share some thoughts about children with SEND returning to your setting – they might help you plan for them coming back to nursery

- Have you had a discussion with parents/carers about the families, and your, concerns about the child coming back to nursery?
- Have you done a separate risk assessment for any children with SEND or updated any existing risk assessments? (Do you have child returning who likes to lick/spit for example? How will you manage this?) How will you manage social distancing with them? (For children with a lower level of understanding this will be more difficult to manage). With all of the sunshine we have been having have you considered how children will have sun cream applied when they are not able to do it themselves?
- Do you have any children who are on shared placements? How will you manage this?
- Many children with SEND need a comforter, use their own bottle/cup or have a chew toy that they bring in from home and will need this to settle at nursery. How will you manage this?
- If you have a child with a Care Plan have you reviewed it to see if it needs amending in line with current advice?
- Could you take photos – or even better make a short video – that shows parents what will be different about nursery so that they can share them with the children? Can you send it to them, add it to your website or upload it to Tapestry (or whichever system you use)?
- Have you highlighted any areas or items that are usually at nursery but won't be available when children return? Could you replace some of these with alternatives, particularly if the child has a particular liking for certain things that won't be available?

- Before children return could you add some visuals around the nursery? You might want clear signs if children are no longer allowed in some areas. In addition you may want to make sure other visuals are clear and plentiful around the nursery so that children can see what is available
- Have you got enough of the corresponding symbols/photos to make up visual timetables or first/next cards regularly through the day – especially if you are going to be directing to handwashing several times during the session for example. Could you give parents any symbols/photos to help at home with the changes
- If children will see different staff members to usual could you send a photo of the staff with their names to home?
- Do you have a child with involvement from other teams in STePS (Hearing Impaired, Visually Impaired or Physically Impaired) and have you contacted them to ask for any advice around these specific needs?

We know that these are just a few suggestions and there are probably many other things you are thinking about. We are providing a few symbols that you might need at the moment

Please get in touch if we can support you in any way

We hope to be seeing you very soon

Lynn Brierley, Sam McKenna, Deirdre Fleming, Katherine Boden and Julie Whitmore
(The Early Intervention Team)