

Doncaster Child Development Centre

Early Skills Group Wednesday morning session



The group was formed with the aims to:

- Bring children with additional and complex needs and their families together leading to mutual support and exchange of ideas.
- Bring together children in a social situation to develop early skills through structured group activities.
- Help encourage children in all areas of their development through the use of play activities and social interaction.
- Promote independence skills.
- Address practical issues of seating.
- Work on all areas of speech, language and communication.
- Give access to the light and sensory room (Snoezelen) to provide a visual and sensory stimulating experience.

The people you will meet regularly at group are Nursery Nurses and Speech and Language Therapist.

Links are maintained with Occupational Therapists, Physiotherapists and allied health/education professionals.

Occasionally we also have students observing our work, please let us know if you would prefer students not to be present.

The groups are held on Wednesday mornings during term time between 10.00am – 12.00pm in the large teaching room in Children's Outpatients Department.

Please bring with you (if appropriate):

- Nappies
- Play clothes
- Drink
- Any specific food not provided by the hospital
- Orthoses (splints, boots)

As we sometimes have painting sessions, please dress your child in suitable clothes.

The group takes place during term time.

Children are welcome to attend the group until the end of the term in which they have their third birthday.

We expect that you regularly attend the sessions, please inform us if you have difficulty attending. Prolonged poor attendance may lead to your child losing their place in the group.

The group has a multi-disciplinary team approach; therefore, for the benefit of your child, information may be shared between professionals involved in their care.

Any information will be treated in confidence.



Makaton signs will be used throughout the session to support children's understanding of language and the routine of the group. Objects of Reference will be also be used. Please ask for an explanation if you are not familiar with these forms of communication.

If you are unable to attend please contact the department on 01302 366666 ext 4774 to let the Nursery Nurses know.

Timetable of activities

10.00am Arrival

Singing

Welcome and settling down period with free play

A social 'settling down' activity time to encourage the children to take part using movement and communication in any way that is appropriate. Emphasis is placed on turn taking, developing listening and language, using familiar rhymes and actions.

Creative/ Tactile activity

Activities designed to encourage hand/eye co-ordination and development of hand function. This may involve using different sensory materials to introduce new experiences.

Multi-sensory room (Snoezelen)

An environment that is safe, secure and relaxing, created to stimulate the primary senses by encouraging the children to be themselves and express their feelings through a therapeutic and relaxing atmosphere.

Computer session to fit around the activities, if appropriate to your child and if staff are available. Access to a touch-screen computer to encourage listening, turn taking and hand/eye co-ordination.

**We hope that you and your child enjoy and benefit from the group.
Any suggestions you would like to make are welcome.**





Patients and Visitors using Mobile Phones & Taking Pictures on Trust Premises

Because modern mobile phones have the ability to shoot & transmit still and moving images, most people now have a stills camera and a video camera in their pocket. Whilst very convenient, these functions can create serious problems.

- There are certain areas where mobile phones interfere with medical equipment. These areas are identified by signs, and we ask visitors and patients to turn off their phones when they enter them.
- Wherever possible please switch phones to silent mode to restrict noise levels.
- Only people who give informed consent should appear in a photograph. Patients and staff who have not given consent must never appear in the background of a shot. Equally, un-consenting patients should never be secretly recorded by another patient or visitor.
- Using a video camera or the video capability of your mobile phone within the hospital is forbidden. This is to prevent confidential conversations about patients' health and treatment being recorded by mistake in the background.
- If visitors or patients shoot images of other patients or staff and post these images on social media or other websites, without the knowledge or consent of the people portrayed, there can be serious consequences.

Occupational Therapy in Early Skills Group

The role of the Occupational Therapist is to work with children with a range of needs to increase and achieve independence. As well as the Occupational Therapist offering support within the Early Skills groups, the therapists will also see children within a variety of settings including the Children's Outpatient Department, the child's home, school or nursery setting.

Posture and Seating

Good posture is vital in enabling children to engage in a range of activities. There are several benefits from maintaining a good seating position, these include:

- Preventing postural difficulties such as contractures and spinal difficulties.
- Improving head alignment for visual tracking and socialising.
- Maximising a child's fine motor skills.

The Occupational Therapist recommends how good posture can be promoted with seating and postural advice. Within the Early Skills group a correct seating position can be achieved through a range of supportive seating.

Children's Physiotherapy

The children's Physiotherapy team is based in the Children's Outpatient Department at Doncaster Royal Infirmary. If your child requires physiotherapy they will need to be referred by either your GP or Paediatrician. Once a referral has been received an appointment will be made for your child to be assessed in the hospital. After this appointment the physiotherapist will discuss whether therapy will be beneficial for your child and what support can be given.

The physiotherapist team treat a wide range of conditions using specialist skills. The main aim of physiotherapy is to help children with their physical development such as sitting, crawling and walking and help with normal movement and posture.

The physiotherapist will work with you, your child and other professionals to offer advice on helpful positions and activities to support your child's physical development. Sometimes specialist equipment is appropriate and the physiotherapist will assess and support you and your child with this.



Your child may see the physiotherapist in many different settings such as clinic, home, nursery, children's centres or within the Early Skills group to offer support and advice. The physiotherapist will discuss which setting they feel is most appropriate for your child to be seen in.

Your child will have a named physiotherapist who you will be able to discuss any concerns with. Within the team you may also work with a Physiotherapy Assistant who will support you and your child with their physiotherapy management.

Speech & Language Therapy Department

Speech and Language therapists form part of the multi-disciplinary teams involved in the early skills groups. They encourage the development of your child's communication skills through:

- Liaison and discussion with parents.
- Activities implemented by our nursery nurses.
- Direct work when appropriate.

Makaton sign is routinely used to help children attend to and understand the language of the groups, as well as give them a way of communicating if they are not yet able to speak. For more information speak to your speech & language therapist.

Objects of Reference are also used for the same reason, eg. a cup to show it is snack time. See your speech & language therapist for more information. They can also provide support for children with feeding difficulties when appropriate.

To contact the team, please telephone: 01302 366666, ext 3874.

Service for children with a visual impairment

The team offer specialist educational support across Doncaster for children who have a visual problem. This includes children from early years through to primary and secondary education.

Many of the children who need specialist support are referred to by medical personnel. However, there is an open referral policy which means that anyone who has concerns about a child's vision can contact them directly. Referral forms, along with other information, are available on the Doncaster website:- www.doncaster.gov.uk (Search for SPEDT, and follow links to the V.I. site.)



They work with children who have an identified visual impairment which is likely to affect their learning and development. The children may also have physical, hearing and/or learning needs.

Their aim is to minimize the effects of visual impairment by offering practical support and advice to:-

- Parents and carers.
- Nursery staff.
- Other people involved with your child.

The early years team

The team are made up of a specialist teacher of children with a visual Impairment and a specialist technical support assistant with VI experience including Braille and adaptation of teaching and learning resources.

What do we do?

They will arrange to visit you after your child has been referred to find out what your child can see and do. This will involve talking to you and observing your child in play and everyday situations.

Where necessary, help and advice will be offered about activities to promote your child's development and learning, through play and sensory stimulation.

They work closely with other professionals who are involved with your child, in order to provide the best possible support.

On the first visit they will:

- Get to know you and your child and begin the visual assessment process.
- Give you the opportunity to ask questions.
- Talk about your child's development and progress.
- Discuss the kind of help on offer.
- Agree and plan future support.

Contact details:

Service for Children with a Visual Impairment

SPEDT

The Civic Office, Floor 3

Waterdale

Doncaster

DN1 3BU

Tel: 01302 734838

Email: vi.team@doncaster.gov.uk





Patient Advice & Liaison Service (PALS)

PALS staff are available to offer advice or information on healthcare matters. The office is in the Main Foyer (Gate 4) of Doncaster Royal Infirmary. Contact can be made either in person, by telephone or email. PALS staff can also visit inpatients on all Trust sites.

The contact details are:

Telephone: 01302 553140 or 0800 028 8059

Email: pals.dbh@dbh.nhs.uk